

Iraq frees French TV crew

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq freed a three-member French television team Saturday after holding them for 12 days. Correspondent Richard Binet, cameraman Didier Dahan, and soundman Fabien Briand — all working for the French television channel Antenne 2 — crossed into southern Iraq from Kuwait and were picked up near Nassiriya on April 9. "We have been taken by Iraqi troops because we were going to Nassiriya because there was some fighting over there," Binet told a news conference after his release. He said they have been taken first to Basra, Iraq's second largest city, and then to Baghdad where they spent some time in a private house and then in a prison 30 km from the capital. Binet, who like his colleagues telephoned home shortly after being freed, said they have been well-treated on the whole, but added that conditions in the prison had been more difficult. "We just had the same treatment as all the other prisoners but the conditions of the prisoners here are very bad," he said.



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Kidnapped Bahraini girl released

BAHRAIN (AP) — Bahrain's acting consul-general in Bombay said that a man with a Kuwait-Iraq accent and ranting about the Gulf war kidnapped his daughter for some 24 hours in the Indian city, newspapers reported Saturday. Five-year-old Widad Hobail, daughter of Jaffar Ahmad Hobail, was released unharmed late Thursday, apparently after the kidnapper had second thoughts about the crime. Mr. Hobail told the newspapers. He said that the kidnapper "speaking broken English with a Kuwait-Iraqi accent" first demanded ransom of between \$90,000 and \$10 million and gave him 24 hours to arrange for the money. The man had taken the girl from her school that Thursday morning, using a letter with a forged signature to induce the school principal to let him take the girl early, Mr. Hobail said. He said he ignored the kidnapper's warning not to call the police. Indian security personnel immediately put a tap on his telephone and sealed all exits to the city to search for the girl, the diplomat said. Soon after the 24 hour deadline ended, Mr. Hobail heard from the kidnapper. "The man ranted about the Gulf war and then told me he did not want the money and he would release my daughter the same day," Hobail told the English-language Gulf Daily News. Later, a caller with an Indian voice said the girl was at the Ambassador Hotel and he could get her.

Sudan says its forces killed 370 rebels

KHARTOUM (R) — Government forces killed 370 members of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in an attack on one of their bases in the south, the official Sudan News Agency (SUNA) said Saturday. The attack was mounted by troops in Bahr el Ghazal, one of three states in war-torn southern Sudan. The agency quoted army sources as saying the rebel base had been destroyed. Among the guerrillas killed were the commander of the base and two foreigners. Four government troops were wounded, SUNA said.

Eximbank gives guarantee for house sale to Israel

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Export-Import Bank has approved financing for a \$64.7-million sale of prefabricated houses to Israel for settling Soviet and East European immigrants. The financing would cover sale of 3,000 U.S.-built wooden housing units to Israel's ministry of construction and housing, the U.S. government bank said. About one million immigrants are expected to settle in Israel over the next five years, creating a demand for 250,000 new houses, the bank said. The actual financing will be provided primarily by the Republic National Bank of New York. The Eximbank guarantees the loans as a boost to U.S. suppliers whose industry has been in a slump.

Hostage turns 50 in captivity

BEIRUT (AP) — Kidnapped German relief worker Heinrich Struebig turns 50 Sunday, his second birthday in captivity. No group has claimed to hold Struebig, abducted with fellow German relief worker Thomas Kempner, 29, in the southern city of Sidon on May 16, 1989. The two worked for the German ASME-Humanitas aid agency. They are among the 13 Westerners missing in Lebanon.

Japan said sending minesweepers to Gulf

TOKYO (R) — Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu has virtually decided to send minesweepers to help clear the Gulf of mines, Japanese media reported Saturday. Mr. Kaifu was quoted as saying that arrangements for sending the minesweepers had entered the final stage, adding that his government would undertake the work on its own responsibility.

King, Baker describe talks as productive

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AQABA — His Majesty King Hussein and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker Saturday held talks on Middle East peace efforts. Both sides later described the meeting as productive and useful.

King Hussein, talking to journalists after two and a half hours of talks with Mr. Baker, said "constructive dialogue" was needed in the "period ahead" towards peace in the region. He expressed hope that "it will not be long before we see some progress."

Mr. Baker also voiced caution against attaching expectations of immediate progress and an immediate breakthrough in the peace process.

The secretary of state, who flew in here from occupied Jerusalem at midday after talks with Palestinian leaders there (see story below), said he was pleased with his "full discussions" on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem.

He said his meeting with the Palestinians in Jerusalem focused on "the importance of breaking taboos that exist between Arabs and Israelis and between Israelis and Palestinians."

Mr. Baker emphasised he would like to see improved relations with Jordan.

"We discussed ways we can strengthen that relationship in an effort to bring it back to the status

which it enjoyed during the past," Mr. Baker said.

The secretary, who last met King Hussein in Washington in August after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, skipped the Kingdom on his previous two trips.

He will visit Syria, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia on his trip and may return to Israel as soon as next week.

In his comments here, Mr. Baker urged parties to the conflict to "create and develop a peace process that could work... peace comes if the parties to the conflict are determined to make it happen."

On Israel's policy of building settlements in the occupied Arab territories, Mr. Baker said he disagreed with Israel on this policy. He reiterated the U.S. stand which considers Jewish settlements as an "obstacle" to peace.

In a brief opening statement to reporters, the King said:

"I would like to say how pleased I have been together with my colleagues to welcome in Jordan Secretary Baker on this visit and I believe that although the time has been short we have covered much ground and I believe that this is a milestone in terms of relations between our two countries that have grown and developed over many years suffered maybe in recent times. But it is a relationship based on mutual respect and friendship and commitment towards a better future for the

people in this region and in the world. I am very happy with the secretary's visit and with our talks and hope that this visit offers us the opportunity to begin again the intensive, frank and constructive dialogue that is so needed in the times ahead. We particularly view the fact that the U.S. and President Bush my old friend and the secretary are involved in the problems of the area, particularly the Arab-Israeli problem (and) the Palestinian-Israeli problem, as extremely encouraging. Needless to say that we have always been committed to the cause of peace, a just and lasting peace in this region and see some real progress towards achieving this goal which is so dear to all of us."

Mr. Baker said: "First let me thank you for hospitality. I, too, Your Majesty, am very pleased with the talks that we conducted and I think that they were very productive and useful and I too would like to see a strengthening of the relationship between the U.S. and Jordan which has indeed suffered in the past. We had occasion to have a full discussion on talks that I have had in Arab capitals and in Israel, talks that I have had with Palestinians in the territories respecting the peace process, respecting the Israeli-Palestinian problem and respecting the Arab-Israeli conflict in general. We also had on opportunity to discuss the bilateral relationship — the

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Palestinians cautiously optimistic after meeting Baker in Jerusalem

By Daoud Kuttab
Special to the Jordan Times

EAST JERUSALEM — Palestinian political figures from the occupied territories who met with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker told journalists that they were "cautiously optimistic" and said that some progress was made.

Addressing a crowded press conference at the national theatre in Jerusalem, Faisal Hussein, who headed the delegation said: "The atmosphere was constructive more than the two earlier meetings." He said that while the two earlier meetings were focused on problems and obstacles this meeting concentrated on how to overcome these obstacles. "This meeting touched on substance rather than slogans," he said.

This was the longest meeting yet between Palestinians and Baker and with the Palestinian delegation cut down to three it appears that Palestinians were able to go into details both of the living situation in the occupied territories and the long-term Palestinian aspirations. "For the first time I feel that we were able to go into details about life under occupation in

human terms," said Hanan Mikhail-Ashrawi. Apparently during the discussions the American side listened attentively. "You could hear a pin drop as they were listening receptively and compassionately," she said.

Palestinian participants were, however, not very forthcoming to journalists with details. They said that there was an agreement not to discuss details for fear that premature disclosure would sabotage whatever progress was being made. The Palestinians said that various formulas for Palestinian participation were discussed including independent, joint Jordanian-Palestinian and as part of a single Arab delegation. On the sponsorship of the conference both the European and U.N. roles were discussed as being essential. One participant told the Jordan Times that the reason for Palestinian encouragement is the fact that the U.S. seems to be moving closer and closer towards an international parity rather than a regional one. The participants said they prefer to refer to the talks about gathering as a "conference" rather than a specifically regional or international conference.

There was also discussion about the interim self governing arrangement and the various phases being proposed and the means of linking these phases.

It was not clear from the Palestinian participants whether they were

encouraged because Mr. Baker was angry with the Israelis and therefore took his anger at the Israelis in his meeting with the Palestinians or whether they were optimistic because of a tangible agreement on specifics. At one point Mr. Baker assured Mr. Hussein of his sincerity by saying "read my comments tomorrow."

One of the issues that seem to have angered the Americans was the settlement issue. Mr. Baker showed the Palestinian participants a clip from an ABC News item about the latest Israeli settlement of Revivim. In it a Palestinian farmer explains how his farm land was taken from him and an arrogant settlers saying that they did not care about the U.S. opposition to settlement so long as they were able to establish facts on the ground. Mr. Baker told the Palestinians that this kind of talk really angers the U.S. public and he felt personally insulted by it.

All three Palestinians stressed that there was a cautious optimism. Zakaria Al-Agha, head of the Gaza Medical Association, said that he was less pessimistic than the previous meeting. "Maybe it was the atmosphere, maybe it was the frankness in which issues were discussed," but he stressed that "I can't say that there is real tangible progress," Mr. Hussein said: "This doesn't mean that our

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Kuwait names new cabinet, Sabahs keep key posts

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Kuwait, under pressure to form a more democratic government, Saturday announced a new cabinet with members of the ruling Al Sabah family keeping key posts.

The cabinet was announced by the crown prince and prime minister, Sheikh Saad al Abdullah Al Sabah.

The entire cabinet resigned on March 19 amidst intense public complaints about the government's difficulties restoring essential services following Kuwait's liberation.

Sheikh Saad removed four members of the royal family from the cabinet but added two other members. In all, there are five Al Sabahs on the new, 21-man cabinet, down from seven on the former cabinet.

Radio Kuwait said Sheikh Salem Al Sabah was moved from the Interior Ministry to take charge of foreign affairs. He was also appointed deputy prime minister.

Kuwait's influential finance minister, Sheikh Ali Khalifa Al Sabah, who ran the Oil Ministry for 12 years until last June, was replaced as finance minister by Nasser Abdullah Al Rodhan, formerly in charge of commerce and industry.

Sheikh Salem replaced the emirate's long-serving foreign minister and deputy premier, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, who was dropped from the government.

The new cabinet replaces a caretaker administration which ran the country after Sheikh Saad's cabinet resigned.

The cabinet resigned amid public dissatisfaction over restoration of basic services after a seven-month Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and the Gulf war.

The post of ministry of state for foreign affairs, previously held by a member of the Sabah family, was dropped from the new 20-member cabinet.

The prime minister, in a letter

to the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, said the new government was formed at a critical time after the destruction of Kuwait's infrastructure by the war.

He said the government would create "an appropriate atmosphere to hold general elections next year" for a new parliament, as promised by the emir.

"The weight of responsibility is heavy," Sheikh Saad, the emir's cousin who has been prime minister since 1978, said.

Members of the royal family in the new cabinet include the new interior minister, Sheikh Ahmad Hamoud Al Jaber Al Sabah, a former provincial governor.

Opposition groups had demanded the exclusion of all Sabahs who served in the government before the Iraqi invasion last August.

They are also demanding a clear date for elections, prefer-

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His Majesty King Hussein with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Aqaba Saturday (Petra photo)

Kurdish leaders in Baghdad for talks

Combined agency dispatches

KURDISH LEADERS took up an offer of peace talks from President Saddam Hussein in a move aimed at paving the way for the return of about two million Iraqi refugees.

A spokesman for the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) in London said Saturday a four-man delegation, led by veteran guerrilla Jalal Talabani, was in Baghdad to seek full implementation of a 1970 accord granting the Kurds autonomy.

The talks in Baghdad took place as 320 U.S. marines flew into northern Iraq, spearheading a five-nation operation to set up safe havens for hundreds of thousands of mainly Kurdish refugees who fled violence.

The Kurdish delegation went to Baghdad after an invitation from President Saddam whose previous offer of an amnesty was dismissed by the rebels.

Spokesman Sherwan Bizayee said a representative of KDP leader Massoud Barzani, Sami Abdul Rahman of the People's Democratic Party and Rasoul Mamand of the Socialist Party of Kurdistan were in Baghdad.

"We are going to suggest to them (the Iraqis) that any agreement has to be backed up with guarantees from the international

community, preferably the United Nations," Mr. Bizayee said. The Kurds have accused the government of reneging on a 1970 agreement granting them full autonomy.

"They are discussing an Iraqi offer for expanded autonomy within the federated structure of Iraq, promising democracy, pluralism and constitutional rule in Baghdad," a spokesman for Mr. Talabani said.

An Iraqi Shiite opposition leader in Damascus, Taqi Al Mudarresi, mentor of several Shiite groups, ruled out negotiations with Baghdad and said the fight would go on.

Ayatollah Mudarresi also claimed in a statement that fighting was continuing in and around the cities of Basra, Tammamah and Karbala.

The spokesman for the KDP in Damascus, Falakeddin Kaka'i, said the Baghdad trip followed meetings between the Kurdish groups and a delegation from the Iraqi government.

An authoritative Kurdish source said the decision to go to Baghdad was reached after consultations with the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council: The United States, Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union.

"They were asked whether

they would be prepared to guarantee any agreements reached with Saddam and some have already agreed to do so," said the source, who would not elaborate.

The Kurds are equally sceptical that U.S. President George Bush and the other Kuwait coalition allies would be prepared to support their latest effort to topple the Iraqi government.

Both Mr. Talabani and Mr. Barzani have admitted in recent interviews that they would be unable to overthrow the government without foreign help.

Because of that, they were anxious not to waste the opportunity provided by the invitation for talks.

Their main demand is full respect for the 1970 agreement granting the Kurds full autonomy in their region and the establishment of a truly democratic and pluralistic regime in Iraq, ending the rule of the Arab Socialist Baath Party.

Sources said the Kurds would also demand hefty compensation from Iraq's oil revenues for the thousands of Kurdish towns razed in recent years to depopulate the border regions.

Kurdish sources said the decision to embark on negotiations followed intensive negotiations among the Kurdish groups.

S. Arabia unlikely to attend peace talks

AQABA (Agencies) — Saudi Arabia, contrary to earlier expectations, is unlikely to attend at least the opening session of a regional Middle East peace conference with Israel, a U.S. official said on Saturday.

Senior Saudi officials had predicted that in the new post-Gulf war climate Riyadh would be represented at a peace conference and would exert a moderating influence.

But the U.S. official told reporters: "With respect to the Gulf states, it would be likely that they will not be participating with Israel in the conference but it would be the neighbouring states instead."

The official briefed reporters who arrived in Aqaba with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

Mr. Baker, who flew to Cairo Saturday, himself said Arabs negotiating with Israel on peace are likely to be limited to "front-line" states and the Palestinians.

Mr. Baker flew to Cairo Saturday evening and met with Foreign Minister Esam Abdul Meguid. He was to hold more extensive talks Sunday with President Hos-

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Lebanese differ over role in peace parley

BEIRUT (R) — Two ministers in the Lebanese government differed on Saturday over any Lebanese role in an Arab-Israeli peace conference.

Shiite Muslim Minister of State Nabih Berri told Reuters Lebanon should steer clear of a Middle East peace conference but should instead push for Israel to withdraw its troops from its territory.

"Lebanon is not concerned with any regional or international conference but asks the Security Council and the United States to implement (U.N. Security Council) Resolution 425," he said.

Foreign Minister Faris Bouez, also a close ally of Syria, was quoted on Saturday as saying it was Lebanon's "right and duty to be an essential member of the international conference."

"Lebanon should enter the peace conference not to negotiate its problem but the Palestinian problem as solving this would directly affect Lebanon," Beirut's Al Nahar newspaper quoted him as saying.

Mr. Berri said the U.N. resolution, which calls for an immediate and unconditional Israeli withdrawal, was a decision taken by an international referee and therefore did not need to be revised.

"It is extremely dangerous for Lebanon to enter this thing (a conference) because the government has Resolution 425... and Lebanese diplomacy should work on that," Mr. Berri said in an interview.

Mr. Berri, who was visiting the southern port of Sidon, headed

the Syrian-backed Amal militia, which he declared disbanded earlier this year in line with a government drive to end the civil war.

Mr. Bouez, a Christian Maronite, said on Wednesday Lebanon's stand was clear: "We are... with any comprehensive international conference and we are against (Israel) trying to isolate any state and exert pressure on it (through bilateral talks)."

A U.S. official, briefing reporters travelling with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Jordan Saturday, said only Israel's neighbours would probably attend the proposed peace conference.

Lebanon is Israel's northern neighbour. Israel has said it will only withdraw its forces from a "security zone" inside Lebanon when the Lebanese army and a strong government in Beirut can guarantee the security of its border.

Syrian Information Minister Mohammad Salman said this week Lebanon should be included as a party to any Middle East peace conference or at least its problems should be on the agenda.

During Mr. Baker's visit to the Middle East earlier this month, the Lebanese government called on Syria and Egypt to use their influence with the Bush administration and seek an end to Israel's control of the "security zone" in South Lebanon. The issue is believed to have been a key topic during Mr. Baker's talks with Syrian leaders.

Bush pledges OIC to work for peace

JEDDAH (AP) — President George Bush has assured the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) that the United States is committed to Middle East peace efforts. OIC officials said Saturday. They released a text of a message that Mr. Bush sent Hamid Al Ghabid, the secretary-general of the OIC, stating: "The United States remains committed to the search for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338." The message was in reply to one sent by Mr. Ghabid to congratulate Mr. Bush on victory in the Gulf war and urging him to find a solution to the Middle East problems, said the officials. They did not say when the message was received at OIC headquarters in Jeddah. Mr. Bush said the peace the United States sought involved the principles of trading land for peace, security of all states in the region and the legitimate political rights of the Palestinians, according to these officials. "Now indeed is the time to work even more strenuously for a just and durable peace in the Middle East," Mr. Bush was quoted as saying.

U.S. forces build camp near Zakho

SILOPI, Turkey (Agencies) — About 500 American marines began building a refugee camp in northern Iraq on Saturday under an allied plan to return half a million Iraqis, U.S. military officials said.

"The first tents went up today in Zakho for the refugees," marine Lieutenant Colonel Michael Boyce told reporters.

He said the marines had crossed the border in battalion strength — 450 to 500 men — by helicopter and had met no Iraqi resistance.

The United States has asked Iraq to pull its troops well back from the Zakho region to make way for refugee havens, a U.S. diplomat said earlier Saturday.

"We asked for the withdrawal of Iraqi forces to a line 30 kilometres south of (the town of) Zakho," the diplomat told Reuters.

"The idea is to give us breathing space in the Zakho valley where we plan to set up transitory camps for the refugees."

U.S. Lieutenant-General John Shalikashvili, allied task force commander, had transmitted the demand for Iraqi army evacuation from Zakho at Friday's meeting with two senior Iraqi officers just inside Iraq.

"The Iraqi delegation asked to study the proposal," the diplomat said. "Negotiations are still going on."

Gen. Shalikashvili and allied officers met two Iraqi brigadier-generals, Nushwan Danoun and Abdul Hafiz Jazail, for 50 minutes on the Iraqi side of the Habur crossing between Iraq and Turkey.

The U.S. general said later no further meeting had been arranged, saying issues would be pursued through other channels.

A U.S. spokesman at the Turkish border town of Silopi said the marines had gone in with infantrymen, engineers and civil affairs specialists to establish the first camp near Zakho.

Major Ron Gahagan said work had also started on repairing one of two damaged bridges across the Hezil River, which marks the border between Turkey and Iraq. U.S. supply trucks were expected to cross the river on Sunday for the first time.

About 17,500 U.S., British, French, Dutch and Italian troops plan to set up havens in northern Iraq where refugees now stuck in filthy mountain encampments can be housed.

U.N. agencies must have a clear mandate to work in refugee havens in northern Iraq and need to help plan them to ensure a smooth takeover from allied troops, a U.N. official said Saturday.

Daniel Conway, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representative in Turkey, told Reuters the nature of any United Nations role should be spelled out quickly.

"If we wait until after they (allied troops) leave before we do anything, it is going to be a disaster," he said.

The U.S.-led task force hopes to turn over the new camps and supply lines to the United Nations, which has made a separate agreement with the Baghdad government to establish humanitarian centres for needy civilians throughout Iraq.

Mr. Conway said U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar was expected to talk in Paris Saturday with UNHCR Commissioner Sadako Ogata and Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, special U.N. envoy for humanitarian affairs in the Gulf.

هذا من الأصل

Iraq discloses dangerous weapons, but Washington says it is not enough

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Iraq has disclosed its arsenal of poison gas and ballistic missiles to the United Nations but the United States accused Baghdad of deliberately leaving out its biological and nuclear weapons programme.

Allied diplomats said they agreed with U.S. complaints about the lack of details on nuclear-grade weapons but had more sketchy information on whether Iraq had the capability of conducting germ warfare.

A spokesman at the U.S. Defence Department said the United States suspected Iraq had the capability to create agents for biological weapons but was not certain if the weaponry had been created.

The detailed breakdown of the Iraqi arsenal was presented by Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmad Hussein in a letter to U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

It was the first step by Iraq towards complying with U.N. demands to destroy the missiles it fired against Israel and Saudi Arabia in the Gulf war and the chemical weapons it is alleged to possess.

As required by a Security Council resolution adopted on April 3, Iraq's statement set in motion a complicated countdown

that could see the destruction of these weapons in about two months.

Mr. Hussein gave listings and locations of chemical weapons and ballistic missiles in his letter (see separate list) but said Iraq did not possess any biological weapons, which the Security Council had also ordered destroyed.

On nuclear weapons, the foreign minister said all Iraq's atomic materials were used for peaceful purposes and had already been put under safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said: "They declare no nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons-usable material or other related facilities or activities. We don't think that response is satisfactory."

Other U.S. officials said they were certain Iraq had highly enriched uranium supplied by France and the Soviet Union which could be used for nuclear weapons.

In an implied threat to force Iraq to comply with council resolutions, the Sanctions Committee of the Security Council made no immediate decision at a closed-door meeting Friday on Baghdad's request to be allowed

to sell nearly \$1 billion worth of oil to pay for food and other goods it urgently needs.

The committee is expected to wait until it becomes clear that Iraq will not impede a plan by the United States, Britain and France to set up protected camps for Kurdish and other refugees, diplomats said.

Nevertheless, the list presented by Iraq was substantial, and according to one Soviet diplomat showed Iraq's willingness to comply with the U.N. resolution.

Mr. Hussein said Baghdad's arsenal contains 51 Al Hussein upgraded Scud-type missiles with a range of 640 kms and one Scud missile with a range of 52 to 290 kms.

In addition, it has five Scud-type conventional warheads, 18 Al Hussein-type conventional warheads and another 30 with chemical warheads.

Iraq also said it had four missile launchers and gave their locations, two mobile missile erectors, 28 fixed platforms for ballistic missiles in what it called its Western zone and four missile platforms in the same area.

On chemical weapons, the documents listed the nerve gases sarin and tabun, which kill after a few minutes when the lungs no longer work. But they can be

dispersed in the air, depending on temperature and winds.

The letter said Iraq had 6,920 artillery shells filled with sarin. Another 2,500 saqr-30 short-range missile warheads filled with sarin were under the debris of a levelled storehouse, as were 200 sarin-filled aerial bombs.

Iraq also reported possession of 630 tonnes of tabun along with large quantities of mustard gas in aerial bombs, artillery shells and in storage.

It said that five research and development sites for chemical weapons had been destroyed, presumably by allied bombing in the Gulf war.

Iraq's chemical, biological and nuclear sites and its Scud missiles were prime targets of the allied air attack on Iraq that began Jan. 17. Iraq fired the missiles at Israel and Saudi Arabia during the war, but never carried out its threat to use chemical weapons in the warheads.

The Iraqi letter says that five chemical weapons research and development laboratories were destroyed by the allied bombing, along with a sarin nerve gas production site, a mustard gas production site, four facilities for "intermediary materials," and five workshops for filling shells and missiles with the toxins.

Mengistu offers to resign

NAIROBI (R) — Ethiopian President Mengistu Haile Mariam, battling major rebel advances in the north, offered to resign if it would preserve the unity of the country.

"As long as it would help restore the unity of the country... I am willing and ready to step down," Mengistu said Friday in a three-hour speech broadcast on television and radio.

"I ask the Ethiopian people to give an urgent verdict on how best to stem the threat by the northern rebels — be it through peaceful means or force."

Rebels, who control vast tracts of the north and have come within 160 kilometres of the capital Addis Ababa in the past two months, did not take Mengistu's offer seriously and said they would fight on.

The president said he had called an extraordinary session of the Shengo (parliament) to discuss the issue. Diplomats in Addis Ababa said the government's intentions would become clearer at the meeting, which would probably start on Monday.

They noted that as the Shengo represented only Mengistu's single ruling party, it was likely to urge him to stay on.

The speech was well-publicised — Ethiopians were given the afternoon off to go home and listen to it — but some diplomats said it was disappointing because it appeared to offer no new initiative to end the devastating wars in the north.

"We will have to wait and see what comes out of the shengo meeting next week," said one Western diplomat. "This could just be words, although it could be a chink appearing."

Christopher Clapham, an expert on Ethiopian affairs at Britain's Lancaster University, said the resignation offer could be a tactical ploy to stay in power that could backfire.

"It's a dramatic change which could set in train expectations that could put pressure on him to step down even if he has no intention of doing so," Clapham said.

The government is fending off major attacks by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), fighting for a separate state in the Red Sea province of Eritrea, which it largely controls, and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Party (EPRDF).

The EPRDF, a rebel alliance led by the Tigre people's Liberation Front (TPLF), controls large areas of other northern provinces and has advanced towards Addis Ababa since launching a fresh offensive in late February to topple Mengistu and set up a broad-based administration.

Mengistu, who took power three years after a 1974 revolution which overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie and has ruled with an iron hand, peppered his speech with appeals for unity.

He said the rebels' true motive was to carve off northern Ethiopia and set up a new state based on tribal affiliations.

Spokesmen from both main rebel groups greeted Mengistu's speech with scepticism.

"It's a face-saving approach," Asefa Mamo, a senior rebel official, told Reuters by telephone from London. He added the speech would not affect rebel military strategy.

EPLF spokesman Yemane Meskel, also speaking by telephone from London, said his group wanted more than words.

Though Mengistu did not refer to it, his speech appeared partly to be in response to an unprecedented appeal by a group of Addis Ababa academics earlier this month for the government to step down for the sake of peace.

They urged a ceasefire, a transitional government of community elders and free elections.

U.N. force includes 300 officers, 36 states

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The United Nations Friday disclosed the composition of the 1,440-man peacekeeping mission in the Gulf, which includes 300 officers with about 100 of them drawn from the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The first U.N. infantrymen to be deployed in a buffer zone along the Iraq-Kuwait border fly into Kuwait on Monday but setting up the 36-nation frontier force will take several weeks, its commander said in Kuwait Friday.

Major General Gunther Grenell of Austria said the United Nations also was concerned about the fate of more than 15,000 Iraqi refugees in the demilitarised zone his force will patrol.

The mission will be made up of 300 unarmed military observers, protected initially by five infantry companies totalling 680 men to provide security, as well as a field engineering unit to help clear mines, a logistics unit and an air unit with planes and helicopters.

It will be the first time officers from the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and China are serving in the same

U.N. contingent. Diplomatic sources said they expected each of the five powers to contribute about 20 officers.

The other 200 military observers come from Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Singapore, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Six infantry companies of about 110 men each are drawn from Austria, Denmark, Fiji, Ghana and Nepal and there is a Norwegian-Swedish logistics unit. All are on loan from U.N. peacekeeping forces in Cyprus and Lebanon.

Canada will supply 300 engineers of all ranks, Chile is sending six helicopters with 50 crew, Switzerland is supplying two aircraft and Norway will run a medical unit of 50 people.

In addition, there will be 25 people from Denmark for movement control and a postal unit and 35 from Sweden for a supply unit.

China is helping Algeria's nuclear programme — paper

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. intelligence agencies have determined that China is helping Algeria build a nuclear reactor that may eventually produce fuel for nuclear weapons.

The Washington Post said Saturday. It quoted knowledgeable government sources as saying that China may be violating past pledges on transfers of nuclear technology. The paper quoted other officials as saying the disclosure may undermine the Bush administration's plan to renew favourable terms for Chinese trade.

China had pledged in 1984 that it would submit all nuclear technology exports to inspection by officials of the International Atomic Energy Agency. But the Post said it had been told by officials that none of China's assistance to Algeria had been inspected.

China and Algeria have denied any collaboration on nuclear

weapons, according to the paper. But it quoted intelligence officials as saying the reactor under construction and several years from completion is larger than would be required for routine nuclear research and the construction site shows no provision to extract electric power from the reactor.

It said suspicions have been heightened by the appearance of a Soviet-made anti-aircraft battery near the remote site near the Mediterranean coastline.

President George Bush must ask the congress to renew China's most favoured nation status for trade by June 30.

The House of Representatives voted last year to deny China the status, which provides Chinese goods lower tariffs, because of China's suppression of internal dissent. The Senate voted for the renewal at the urging of Mr. Bush.

Mahjoub killing suspect escapes from police truck

CAIRO (AP) — A suspect in the assassination of Egypt's parliament speaker escaped from custody in southern Egypt, a security spokesman said Saturday.

The spokesman, an interior ministry official, identified the escapee as Safwat Ahmad Abdul Ghani, 28, a notorious religious activist with a 10-year record of arrests. He would not discuss details.

Abdul Ghani was among several suspects expected to be charged soon in the machine-gun ambush last Oct. 12 of Rifaat Al Mahjoub, speaker of the People's Assembly, outside a Nile-side luxury hotel in downtown Cairo.

The spokesman said Abdul Ghani is a prominent member of the extremist underground group Jihad. It was blamed for the 1981 assassination of President Anwar Sadat and a subsequent failed attempt to overthrow the government.

Abdul Ghani was tried and acquitted in the coup attempt. Since the trial, police have detained him six times in different investigations.

Police sources said Abdul Ghani escaped from a closed police truck while en route to Al Minya, a provincial capital south of Cairo.

The sources said Abdul Ghani and another suspect in the Mahjoub killing, Ramadan Gomaa Abdul Fattah, were in the truck with 14 detainees in other cases. Abdul Ghani had been taken to Al Minya from detention in Cairo, where he has been since his arrest last October, to take

year-end examinations under guard at Al Minya university's college of arts, where he is enrolled.

Two officers in charge of the escort detail, riding in a separate car, stopped the truck at Beni Suef, halfway between Cairo and Al Minya, to unload 10 prisoners, the sources said.

As the officers opened the truck's back door, Abdul Ghani and Abdul Fattah jumped them and ran for freedom. The officers gave chase and caught Abdul Fattah, but Abdul Ghani escaped. The other prisoners did not try to flee.

Interior Minister Abdul Halim Musa, the nation's top law enforcement officer, ordered police dragnets in the southern provinces Al Minya and Beni Suef. He ordered checks on known Muslim extremist haunts in Cairo, neighbouring Giza and Fayoum to the south.

Mr. Musa also suspended the two officers, Yousri S. Armanios and Tarek Shamsi, and three lower-ranking guards for failing to open fire on the escapees. The government's Middle East News Agency reported they would be brought before a police disciplinary board.

Shortly after Al Mahjoub's slaying, authorities said Musa was the real target of the assassination by Muslim extremists. They said the five attackers mistook Al Mahjoub's motorcade for that of Musa, who was scheduled to take the same route to his office but deviated at the last minute.

Iran rejects link between British visit and hostages

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani Saturday dismissed any link between a visit by a British minister and Western hostages held in Lebanon.

"Mrs. Lynda Chalker's visit to Tehran has the objective of helping the Iraqi refugees. It is meaningless to connect that issue to the hostages."

"We have no link with the hostage-taking groups nor do we support them," Tehran Radio quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as telling a group of students in the southern city of Shiraz.

Mrs. Chalker, the minister of overseas development, discussed the plight of more than a million Iraqi refugees with Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati.

They have streamed over the border since Iraq put down twin rebellions by Kurds and Shi'ites last month and Tehran says it cannot cope without more international aid.

"Mrs. Chalker said she had come to Tehran to exchange views and coordinate efforts with Iranian officials over British aid to the refugees," the radio said.

Mrs. Chalker said on Thursday she would seek Iran's help in obtaining the release of 12 hostages in Lebanon, including three Britons believed kidnapped by pro-Iranian groups.

The minister handed Mr. Velayati a letter from British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd. She said Britain and Iran should work together to achieve peace in the Gulf region.

Mrs. Chalker is the first British minister to visit Iran since the 1979 revolution.

Britain has sent eight tonnes of relief supplies for the Iraqi refugees in Iran. A further consignment of 80 tonnes is on its way.

The national Iranian News Agency IRNA criticised Mrs. Chalker's remarks on the hostages, saying they showed Britain wanted to make political capital out of a humanitarian issue.

Before going to Iran, Mrs. Chalker said she had a very special message for the Tehran government:

"We are going to help you with the problems you have. Please help us bring home those hostages who should never have been taken and kept for so long."

Iran, which says it has influence but no control over militants believed to be holding the hostages, has called for the release of all captives in Lebanon and the freeing of several hundred Arabs in Israeli jails.

Mr. Velayati said earlier this month that efforts to free hostages had reached a dead end because the United States had not responded positively after several Americans were released by their captors.

Apart from the Britons, six Americans, two Germans and an Italian are believed held hostage in Lebanon.

A radical Iranian newspaper attacked Western plans to create "safe havens" for Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq.

Jomhuri Eslami said: "The scope of the safe havens may gradually expand, posing a major security risk. The flagrant military intervention of the U.S. in northern Iraq is to create a safe zone to form the nucleus for a second Israel in the region."

"This would result in a new round of chaos, arms race and disorder in the region," it said.

The United States has sent troops to create sanctuaries for the Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq in a move the Baghdad government has denounced as interference.

Iran and Turkey both have large Kurdish minorities which have campaigned for autonomy.

List of weapons of Iraq presented to U.N.

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Following are excerpts from Iraq's letter to the United Nations on its weapons of mass destruction. An April 3 Security Council resolution required Iraq to submit a list of its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons as well as its ballistic missiles so they could be removed or destroyed within the next few months. The letter, from Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmad Hussein was submitted in Arabic. The translation is unofficial.

I have the honour to refer to the letter which I addressed to you on 6 April 1991 concerning the Iraqi government's acceptance of Security Council Resolution 687 (1991), and in particular, to my remarks concerning the resolution's treatment of the subject of weapons of mass destruction.

Iraq does not possess any biological weapons or related items... I should like to mention that the Iraqi government accepts the arrangement of an immediate on-site inspection of the sort described in paragraph 9 (B) of the resolution...

Annex I — Chemical weapons:

Location: Muthanna state establishment, 70 kilometres west of Baghdad

Activity: Research and development/production, storage:

1. Research and development laboratories — five sites, each with five laboratories (destroyed).
2. Production site for sarin — one site (destroyed).
3. Production site for mustard gas — one site (destroyed).
4. Production site for intermediary materials — four sites (destroyed).
5. Workshops for filling various type of ammunition (artillery, mortars, aerial bombs and missiles) — five sites (destroyed).
6. Sarin 120-mm missile warhead — quantity, 6,920.
7. Sarin — Saqr-30 missile warhead — quantity, 2,500 (under debris of levelled storehouse).
8. DB-2 aerial bomb (aluminium) — quantity, 200 (under debris of levelled storehouse).
9. Sarin — finished product (stock) — quantity, 75 tonnes.
10. Tabun — intermediate material only — quantity, 150 tonnes.
11. Tabun — poops — quantity, 500 tonnes.
12. Mustard gas — finished product (stock) — quantity, 280 tonnes.

tonnes.

Annex II — Chemical weapons

Activity: storage

(Site, item, type and quantity)

1. Al Walid airbase — sarin — binary-system aerial bomb — quantity, 336.
2. Saddam and Qadisiyah airbases — mustard gas — 500 gauge aerial bomb — quantity, 140.
3. Saddam, Tammuz, Qadisiyah and Al Bakr airbases and Al Tuz airfield — mustard gas — 150 gauge aerial bomb, quantity 900.
4. Chemical proving ground near Fallujah — mustard gas — 155-mm artillery shell, quantity 105.

Annex III — Ballistic missiles

(site, item, type and quantity)

1. Taji — Scud missile — 8K14E — 50 to 300-km range; quantity, 1.
2. Taji — Al Hussein missile — 650 km range — quantity, 51.
3. Taji — conventional warhead — 8F 44 — quantity, 5.
4. Taji — conventional warhead — Al Hussein — quantity, 18.
5. Dujayl — chemical warhead — Al Hussein — quantity, 30.
6. Habbaniya — basic fuel storage tank — TM — quantity, 7.
7. Habbaniya — oxidant storage tank — AK — quantity, 18.
8. Habbaniya — operating-fuel storage tank — TK — quantity, 6.
9. Rashid camp — missile launcher — 9M 117M — quantity, 2.
10. Rashid camp — missile launcher — Al Walid — quantity, 2.
11. Rashid camp — mobile missile erector — Al Nida — quantity, 2.
12. Western zone — fixed platform — quantity, 28.
13. Western zone — missile platform — 9M 117M — quantity, 4.
14. Taji — fuel tanker-truck, quantity, 4.
15. Taji — oxidant tanker-truck, quantity, 5.

Men of Baghdad enjoy day at the races

By Nicholas Phythian

Reuter

BAGHDAD — They may not be at the peak of their form but the horses of Baghdad are full of running.

Without a race for three months because of the Gulf war, they take to the turf with a spring in their step.

For the owners and particularly the punters at the horsemanship club of Baghdad, it is yet another small sign that life in the capital is returning to normal.

"It's good to be back," said Zuhair, a middleman for Western companies before the Gulf crisis. The government-run race course on the western edge of the capital reopened for business Wednesday for the first time since the war closed it in January.

On Friday, a popular day for going to the races, punters clustered around the paddock casting a practised eye over the runners before the first race.

"The horses run not so well at the moment, because of the food and because the bombing and the raids made them nervous," said Zuhair. "There is very little food."

Whatever the talk on the course, club manager Fahmi Sabri said food for the 2,500 horses had not been a problem.

"We have enough food for the horses," he said, adding that they had been well looked after. "The workers, they are coming every morning at six and staying until eight." He expected the horses' form to improve as they became race-fit again.

The circuit, opened in 1948, organises a race meet every Sunday, Wednesday and Friday for eight months of the year. It is closed during the blazing summer months from July to October.

On Friday, punters sipped tea, drank beer or swallowed home-produced cola from recycled Pepsi bottles as they discussed form and marked their race cards.

In the members' enclosure at the top of the stand, opposite the finishing post, fathers and their sons — the club is a male preserve — picked at kebab or dishes of lamb and rice. Large electric fans swirled lazily overhead.

Business at the windows of the betting kiosks was brisk. Punters buy betting slips for five Iraqi dinars (\$16 at the official rate) a time. The bigger the bet they want to place on each horse, the more slips they buy.

The odds — expressed in the form of the winnings from five dinar bets — were displayed on a huge electronic information board opposite the winning post and the main stand.

They were also flashed up on television screens over the betting windows and scattered around the public enclosures.

For a city starved of electricity by U.S. and allied air raids during the Gulf war and after the fighting ended at the end of February, it was another welcome sign.

Sabri said that an estimated 6,000 racegoers turned out on an average day. "At every race meeting we take about 250,000 dinars (\$800,000) in bets," he added.

A flurry of last-minute bets on Friday sent the total amount wagered on the first race to almost 34,000 dinars (\$110,000).

A bell signalled that the horses had left the starting doors set up on the far side of the circuit. A buzz run through the crowd as the horses and the jockeys, who were clad in brightly coloured silk, thundered down the back straight leaving a cloud of dust in their wake.

As they neared the finishing post — as on courses throughout the world — the buzz turned into an excited clamour.

On the skyline, the burnt out shell of the Baghdad telecommunications building, building crippled by U.S. bombs provided a vivid reminder that life was not yet back to normal.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

- 18:00 Cartoons
- 18:15 L'ecole de Paris
- 19:00 News in French
- 19:15 Histoire de L'art
- 19:30 News in Hebrew
- 20:00 News in Arabic
- 20:30 Mother and Son
- 21:10 All our Children
- 22:00 News in English
- 22:30 Paradise

PRAYER TIMES

- 04:34 Fajr
- 05:56 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
- 11:34 Dhuhr
- 16:12 'Asr
- 19:13 Maghrib
- 20:58 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifeth Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 627440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terrassina Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.

Anglican Church Tel. 625383. Tel. 628343.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772561.

Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751.

Assiout International Church Tel. 683326.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 813817, 654922.

The Church of the Nazarene tel. 675691.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

A slight drop in temperatures will take place and winds will be southerly fresh. In Aqaba, it will be dusty with southerly fresh wind and rough sea.

Amman Min./max. temp. 15 / 26
Aqaba 19 / 34
Desert 16 / 31
Jordan Valley 20 / 33

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 32, Aqaba 37. Humidity readings: Amman 25 per cent, Aqaba 19 per cent.

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Iraq views Jordan a main trade outlet

AMMAN (J.T.) — Iraq's main priority is the importation of food and medicine as well as the installation or repair of water purification and power plants, and Jordan will be the main channel for such imports and will later become the main centre for Iraq's trade exchanges, according to Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammad Mahdi Saleh.

Quoted by Sawt Al Shaab Arabic daily, the Iraqi minister said that Jordan had developed itself into a major import-export marketing centre and Iraq will consider the Kingdom as its main outlet and medium for trade with the foreign markets.

In the past, the United Arab Emirates served as the main centre for the trade of Iraqi dates, but this centre will now shift to Jordan, the minister said in an interview with the local daily.

According to Mr. Saleh, Iraq has lost up to 50 per cent of its strategic food supplies during the air raids and the subsequent sabotage attacks which brought devastation to warehouses in 13 governorates.

He estimated the losses to Iraqi economy to be around \$300 billion, including \$20 billion in oil revenues during the present year as Iraq will not be able to raise such revenues in view of a U.N.

trade embargo.

"The bombing raids destroyed 61 bridges in Baghdad and other cities of Iraq and the subsequent sabotage activities came to pursue the conspiracy on Iraq," the minister said. He said that the Iraqi government had seized documents proving that the internal conspiracy was concocted since the fourth day of the ground battles and hatched by the British, U.S. and Israeli intelligence services.

The minister said that China, the USSR and India had adopted negative attitudes towards Iraq during the aggression because they boycotted Iraq economically and supported the military action against the Iraqi people.

Mr. Saleh said Iraq would now give priority to Arab and foreign countries that did not take part in the U.S.-led military alliance against his country.

The Jordanian economy was heavily dependent on trade with Iraq and lost \$1.2 billion in 1990 because of the U.N. sanctions. Jordan was neutral during the crisis, but its economy was severely damaged and the U.S.-led naval forces imposed a blockade on the Aqaba Port, hampering the Kingdom's import-export operations.

Traffic picks up slowly, yet it has only reached half the before August mark

Aqaba strives to reach pre-war level activities

By Rana Sabbagh

AQABA (R) — Jordan hopes its moribund Red Sea port of Aqaba will spring to life once U.N. sanctions against Iraq are lifted but it may not have the labourers to handle a surge in shipping.

Shippers say traffic is slowly picking up but is still only about half what it was before Iraq invaded Kuwait last August.

Before the Gulf crisis and the U.N. embargo, around 70 per cent of cargo handled through Aqaba went to Iraq, which has limited sea outlets.

Most of Aqaba's Egyptian and Syrian labourers left during the Gulf crisis. Shippers say productivity has fallen because the Jordanians who took over are not used to the tough conditions.

"This will form a real danger if many ships arrive at the same time because it will delay their unloading and in such a case a congestion surcharge could be imposed," one shipper said.

Tawfiq Kassar, head of Jordan's Shipping Association, told Reuters war-risk insurance premiums for the Gulf are almost back to their pre-crisis levels.

But allied searches of ships in the Tiran Strait, south of Aqaba, to check for compliance with United Nations embargo, are causing delays and discouraging many from coming back.

Foreign Minister Taher Al

Masri discussed the inspections with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Geneva last week.

"Mr. Baker showed extreme understanding of the negative consequences the inspection is having on the economy and transport sector and promised to study the matter and do something about it," a government source said.

Iraq this month accepted a U.N. resolution formally ending the Gulf war. In return, the U.N. Sanctions Committee partially lifted some trade restrictions allowing Baghdad to resume imports of food and other civilian needs.

Jordan says it is fully complying with sanctions against Iraq, once its biggest export market, at a huge cost to itself.

The United States on Wednesday denied a report in London's Financial Times newspaper that it allowed the shipment of military spare parts to Jordan until just before the outbreak of the Gulf war in January.

The White House said the U.S. government had investigated whether Iraqi front companies operating in Jordan were violating sanctions against Iraq but found no evidence to that effect.

The U.N. has said the Gulf crisis cost this impoverished desert kingdom at least \$1.2 billion in 1990.

About 55,000 Jordanian workers and their families

were badly affected by the stoppage of activity at the port.

"As far as general cargo ships and container vessels are concerned, there has been only a small improvement," one shipping agent said. "Once giant container liners start coming back to Aqaba we can say the situation is back to normal," he added.

The first post-war Iraqi imports of rice, sugar and wheat flour are due to arrive in Aqaba later this month.

Only 43 cargo ships docked at the port in January this year, compared to 127 in January last year. In February, 51 cargo ships reached Aqaba, compared to 120 in February 1990.

The ships are mainly carrying major Jordanian exports such as cement, phosphates, potash and fertilisers.

In 1990, Aqaba handled around 15.5 million tonnes of cargo, compared with 19 million in 1989 and 20.1 million in 1988.

Each tonne of goods reaching the port contributes an average of \$37 to the gross national product, said Akel Abu Tayeh, Aqaba Port Corporation deputy director.

The port, one of Jordan's main sources of income, in the past provided a net revenue of \$44 million a year.

Iraq was almost totally dependent on Aqaba during its 1980-1988 war with Iran, using it to export much of its oil and to import the bulk of its food, commercial and arms needs.

Ministry's programme to revive tourism sector

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Tourism is launching a wide-scale programme to revive the tourism industry in Jordan in the wake of the Gulf war which was responsible for a great deal of damage to the national economy.

Ministry's Secretary General Nasri Atallah told the Jordan Times that his office had prepared an unprecedented programme for a 40-member group of journalists, tour operators, and tourism writers, representing 35 different tourism offices around Europe, who will be arriving Sunday.

During the week-long tour of Jordan's archaeological sites, which include the ancient cities of Petra, Jerash, Um Qais, the Dead Sea and Aqaba, among others, the group members will be oriented on the tourist attractions of the Kingdom, Mr. Atallah said.

The group members, who will be received by Her Majesty Queen Noor and will hold meetings with Jordanian Tourism Ministry officials to discuss their mission, would be guests of the Ministry of Tourism which is now gearing up for further activities to



Nasri Atallah

stimulate the tourism industry, Mr. Atallah added.

On April 27, a Finnish group of tourists, writers and journalists will be arriving in Amman, and on May 10, 120 Italians will come on what Mr. Atallah called a peace tour of the Kingdom.

Both the Finns and the Italians will be taken around the country so as to include its archaeological and tourist sites in their writings and to promote tourism industry

in the country.

"At the same time the ministry is involved in preparing other programmes, posters, booklets and leaflets featuring the tourist attractions in the Kingdom and in a bid to promote the tourism industry," Mr. Atallah added.

"The programme is being launched now that the war has ended and the various airlines are making a comeback to Jordan," said Mr. Atallah.

In an earlier interview, Mr. Atallah estimated Jordan's loss of income, due to the war, at \$250 million and noted that the country's hotels had, at one time, to lay off three quarters of their employees because of poor business.

Mr. Atallah also said that Jordan would next month display its artifacts in the city of Liverpool, in England, and probably in France, later on, in a bid to boost Jordan's tourism industry.

Mr. Atallah said that these programmes were designed to

brighten Jordan's tourist image abroad and to erase all the negative aspects which severely affected to tourism industry during the Gulf crisis.

Four charred to death in car accident

AMMAN (J.T.) — A car accident which occurred at dawn Saturday resulted in the death of four young Jordanians and the total destruction of their vehicle which was engulfed by fire.

The Civil Defence Department (CDD), whose teams rushed to the scene of the accident, near the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC), gave the names of the four dead people as Hisham Jamil Abdul Jabbar (26), Saher Yousef Asaad Arafat (22), Abdul Rahman Abdullah Saeed (24) and Iyad Tayseer Abdul Rahman (21).

The accident took place at one after midnight, along the main road passing in front of the (RCC), with the Audi car and its

four occupants heading at lightening speed towards the King Hussein Youth City.

According to Brigadier Deeb Maani, CDD deputy director for operations who led his teams to the scene of the accident, the driver seems to have lost control over the vehicle as he was negotiating a turn of the road and the car was hurled across the street

hitting the divider, a bus stop and the pavement on the other side with such violent force that the fuel tank burst into flames. The fire soon engulfed the whole vehicle making it impossible for any of its occupants to escape.

He said that the fire completely

burned the bodies of the four

men beyond recognition, and it took CDD teams nearly four hours to put out the fire and to extract the bodies from the burnt out car.

According to Brig. Maani, the CDD team took only four minutes to reach the scene of the accident, but then it was too late to do anything as the car was ablaze.

The CDD, Brig. Maani added, used oxyacetylene flames to cut open the metal sheets of the doors in order to extract the bodies.

Brig. Maani appeals to all drivers to carry fire extinguishers and first aid kits in their cars at all times.

Conference to tackle Palestine question, world issues, impact of Gulf war

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Palestine question, obstacles that impede concerted Arab and Islamic joint actions, and Islamic issues in Africa and Asia will be among the main topics to be discussed at a general national and Islamic conference to open at Khartoum, in Sudan, Thursday.

Jordan is expected to be represented by at least 10 prominent national political and religious figures, including Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arabiyat.

Mr. Arabiyat, who represents the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan, will leave for the Sudanese capital Tuesday to take part in the meeting which is expected to last four days, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

According to Petra, the conference, organised by the Sudanese World Council for Friendship Among Various Nations of the World will be attended by prominent world intellectuals, politicians and leaders of the Islamic religion in the Arab World.

According to the agency, the meeting will be dedicated mainly to consolidating Arab-Islamic

solidarity which manifested itself during the Gulf war so that it can serve as a foundation for further bolstering Arab-Islamic ties.

"World issues and their impact on Arab and Islamic interests in the wake of the Gulf war, developing a joint Arab-Islamic strategy to confront and deal with international conspiracies designed to impose hegemony on the Middle East and the Arab and Islamic countries will be other topics for discussion," the agency added.

Petra said that the conference would also aim at mobilising world public opinion in support of the Palestinian people's cause and for the support of Islamic causes in Asia and Africa in the face of common hostile threats.

The participants will conduct a thorough analysis of the Arab and Islamic situation with a view to working out joint strategies for the Arabs and Muslims in Middle East, Africa and Asia vis-a-vis the new world situation.

The agency said that the conference was expected to discuss the Palestine problem and the impact of the Gulf war on the Palestinian cause.

Ambassador presents credentials in Poland

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan's Ambassador to the Soviet Union Mohammad Al Adwan has presented his credentials to Poland's President Lech Walesa, as a non-resident ambassador to Poland, and conveyed to Mr. Walesa greetings from His Majesty King Hussein and the Jordanian people.

Mr. Walesa said at the presentation ceremony that the Polish people admire the King's wisdom and policies which aim at establishing peace and security in the Middle East.

During the meeting, a general review of the Jordanian-Polish relations and ways for bolstering bilateral trade and economic ties were made, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Earlier, the new ambassador held a meeting with the Polish

foreign minister for a general review of world issues and Jordan's stand vis-a-vis the Gulf crisis and Middle East peace prospects as well as ways to promote bilateral ties.

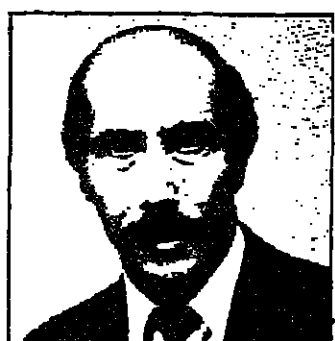
Apart from the USSR and Poland, Mr. Adwan also serves as Jordan's non-resident ambassador to Finland.

Jordan's newly appointed ambassador to Austria, Dr. Akram Barakat, last week presented his credentials to Austrian President Kurt Waldheim and conveyed greetings from His Majesty King Hussein.

Dr. Waldheim voiced his country's deep satisfaction with the excellent ties between his country and Jordan and expressed hope that these ties would witness continued development in all fields.

Union chief dies

RUSEIFA (J.T.) — The body of the late Mohammad Ismail, chairman of the Central Council of the Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions, who died Friday, was laid to rest here and the funeral was attended by representatives of various workers unions in the country.



Mohammad Ismail

Mr. Ismail, who died at the age of 45 in Ruseifa, was born in the village of Dura Al Qareh, near Ramallah in the occupied West Bank where he later joined the local workers union before moving on to Ruseifa where he also joined the labour union. Mr. Ismail was elected member of the federation's Executive Committee, which groups representatives of 17 workers unions in Jordan, before assuming the post of chairman of the Central Committee.

The late Ismail represented the

federation in the Social Security Corporation's board meetings and lectured at the Workers Educational Institute. He also represented the federation in several workers' conferences in Jordan, the Arab World and foreign countries.

Tanning company makes profit, plans to increase production

AMMAN (J.T.) — Despite the recession of the past year, largely brought about by the Gulf crisis, the Jordan Tanning Company (JTC) made JD 600,000 in profits by selling tanned leather and finished products to foreign markets, according to the company's General Director Talal Al Ghazzawi.

"Last year the company sold products worth JD 3 million, of which 41 per cent went to foreign and Arab countries," Mr. Ghazzawi said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

"The company sells semi-finished and various types of finished foreign makes," said Mr. Ghazzawi.

But Mr. Ghazzawi complained

that the continued importation of foreign made shoes has a negative effect on the company's operations and is bound to weaken the leather industry in Jordan.

"We have been struggling to meet the needs of the local markets for leather for the manufacture of shoes, bags etc. over the past 30 years, but we are still facing this strong competition from the foreign shoes imported by Jordanian merchants," Mr. Ghazzawi added.

"The JTC, which was established in 1957, started production in 1962 on a limited scale, but thanks to the continued endeavours of the workers last year, it witnessed an increase in exports

by 17 per cent over the previous year," Mr. Ghazzawi said.

The JTC has worked out plans to invade European markets following Mr. Ghazzawi's general tour which took him to Germany, Belgium and Sweden. He said that he had inspected the leather and tanning industries in these countries and found very good prospects for exporting Jordanian leather to them.

The company, he said, is at the same time concentrating its efforts to modernise its machinery and equipment in order to boost production and improve the quality of the finished leather products.

ICRC convoy leaves for Iraq; teams survey situation in north

AMMAN (J.T.) — A large International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) relief convoy consisting of 33 vehicles, 2 landrovers and 31 trucks leaves Amman today. Most of the vehicles (27 in number) carry various items for a "camp module" intended for 30,000 to 40,000 people.

The other trucks transport: 20 tonnes of chlorine (for water purification), 15 tonnes of diesel fuel, 8 tonnes of gasoline and 4 tonnes of kerosene.

Yesterday, April 20, 16 trucks left Amman, carrying: 160 tonnes of rice, 10 tonnes of cement, 34,450 blankets and 4,060 units of kitchen sets.

All these relief items are intended for various regions of the country, especially for the northern part, where ICRC has recently launched a massive relief operation.

More than 260 ICRC delegates, medical staff, sanitation and logistic personnel are working in different countries for assistance and protection activities.

The ICRC delegation in Amman is very much involved as a logistic rear base for the Baghdad

delegation, which alone comprises more than 80 personnel.

In Iraq, the five ICRC medical teams provide medicines and medical supplies to hospitals and medical facilities while assessing the situation related to diseases caused by unsafe drinking water.

There is one sanitation engineer assigned to each medical team. More than 330 tonnes of medicines, medical supplies and equipment have arrived and been distributed in Iraq. An additional 260 tonnes of medical material to combat epidemic diarrhoeal disease arrived in Baghdad on April 14.

A total of 40 ICRC sanitation engineers and technicians are working to purify and distribute potable water in Iraq. National society personnel involved in this operation come from Algeria, Austria, Australia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

The following operations are under way:

— Two ICRC mobile water purification units are producing potable water which is stored in

plastic bags for use in hospitals. As of April 13, more than 1,000,000 litres of purified water in bags had been distributed to 28 hospitals in Baghdad, to hospitals in Karbala and Najaf and to schools and 67 social institutions. A third mobile water purification unit is operating in Basra. The fourth mobile water purification unit is producing 400,000 litres per day.

— Twenty water trucks (capacity 12,000) transport the potable water to storage tanks. The tanks are located in the most affected urban areas. An additional 10 water trucks will arrive soon and 40 more water trucks have been mobilised.

— The ICRC purchased six mobile water purification units (capacity 150,000 litres per day); they will arrive soon in Baghdad.

ICRC teams carried out surveys in northern Iraq. One ICRC team went as far as Kani Masi at the Iraqi-Turkish border. The ICRC has authorised access to the civilian population throughout the country. A first relief convoy has already been dispatched to the north of Iraq.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Shbeilat in Cairo

AMMAN (Petra) — Lower House of Parliament member Leith Shbeilat left Amman for Cairo Saturday to take part in a seminar on the Gulf crisis and its aftermath due to start there Sunday. The seminar, which is organised by the Arab Unity Studies Centre, will last for three days. Mr. Shbeilat will then visit Sudan to attend a popular Arab-Islamic conference organised by the International Popular Friendship Council in Sudan, to start on April 25. The Islamist deputy will deliver

speeches at the two gatherings and will review the consequences of the Gulf war in the Arab region.

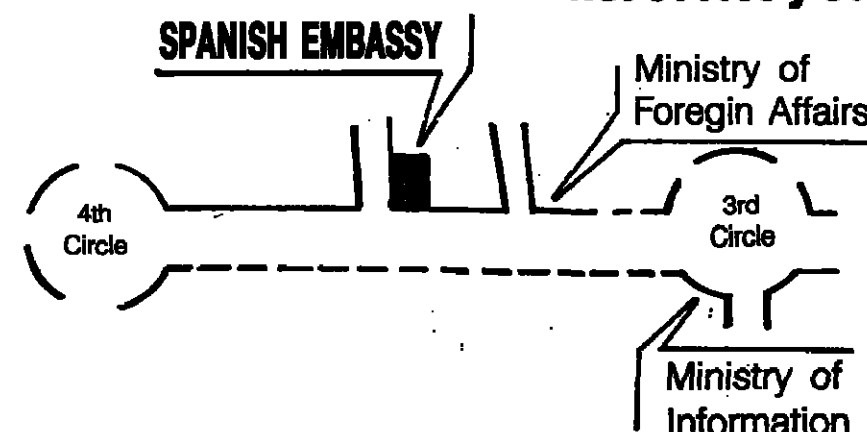
JUST in Damascus

RAMTHA (Petra) — President of the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) Dr. Kamel Ajlouni left for Damascus Saturday at the head of a delegation comprising several faculty deans. Dr. Ajlouni said that his visit came within the framework of cooperation between JUST and the Syrian universities.

ANUNCIO Embajada de España

La Embajada de España tiene el gusto de informar al público que la Cancillería de esta Representación se trasladará próximamente a los nuevos locales según aparece reflejado en el plano.

Durante este periodo, la Embajada permanecerá cerrada, reanudado sus actividades a partir del 24 de abril. Los nuevos números de teléfono: 614166 y 614170



ANNOUNCEMENT SPANISH EMBASSY

The Spanish Embassy has the pleasure to inform the public that this Mission will move to its new premises as appears on the map.

During this period the Embassy will close to resume its activities as of the 24th of April.

The new telephone numbers are: 614166 & 614170

Jordan Times

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Sunday's Economic Pulse

Jordan's economy — boom or bust

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

THOSE WHO have reasons to be unfriendly to Jordan and harm its economy take one of two extreme views in their evaluation of the Kingdom's current economic situation. Part of these claims that Jordan's economy never had it so good, it is booming. The other part looks at the same set of facts but concludes that the economy is at the verge of collapse under the impact of the Gulf crisis.

The purpose of the first extreme viewpoint is to deny Jordan Arab and foreign aid and, to urge creditors to put more pressure on Jordan to extract some of its foreign exchange earnings. The purpose of the opposite extreme viewpoint is to raise doubts regarding the future viability of the Jordanian economy and its ability to recover and survive.

The truth is not in one extreme or the other. The Jordanian economy did actually face difficult circumstances and was hit by the Gulf crisis in many ways, especially the loss of Arab aid, expatriate remittances, exports, tourism and transit activities. However, the Jordanian economy proved itself to be resilient and able to adjust, stand the most difficult times and provide the basic needs of the people. The Jordanian economy does not have surpluses to enable the country to do without external aid, or to resume servicing its heavy debts.

Evaluation of the Central Bank's reserves in the form of gold and foreign currencies is also subject to the two extreme judgments. Some analysts argue that Jordan's reserves are too shallow, that

the current stability of the exchange rate of the Jordan dinar is only a temporary phenomenon, and that the domestic markets will soon experience acute shortage of imported commodities.

When officials try to say that the level of reserves is rather healthy and much better than any time in four years, other analysts would read too much into these pronouncements to conclude that Jordan does not need to be aided and that repayment of foreign debts should be resumed immediately.

The same contradicting extremist positions can also be found in assessing the extent of poverty among the Jordanian population. A study by some United Nations agencies such as UNICEF indicated that one third of Jordan's population are now under the line of poverty against one fifth before the Gulf crisis.

The purpose of dramatising the extent of poverty may have the good intention of attracting more donations to help mothers and children in needy families, but some foreign journalists used the UNICEF rough estimate out of its context to undermine the social record of the regime. The line of poverty in a given country is relative. Perhaps more than one third of the Jordanians live below the line of poverty as determined by European and American standards, but no so by Third World standards.

Jordanian officials have to blame themselves for exaggerating the damages suffered due to the Gulf crisis, such as claiming that 50 per cent of the GNP was knocked off overnight. This understandably

caused some otherwise honest observers to think that the Jordanian economy was going under in total collapse. Other officials have also blamed themselves for claiming that the situation is excellent, which caused some creditors to knock the doors with bags to fill.

The level of foreign reserves owned by the Central Bank is definitely good in comparison with its level two years ago, when the net position was negative. The current net reserves can finance Jordan's normal flow of imports of two months, which is not bad but still insufficient. In Jordan's circumstances of huge and acute deficit in the balance of trade, Jordan should maintain reserves equivalent to at least six months of imports to secure safety and fine-tune the ups and downs in an environment of extreme uncertainty.

The Central Bank scored a remarkable success in rebuilding the depleted foreign reserves out of scratch. This was an achievement in comparison with below-zero reserves in 1988/1989, but there is still a long way to go before the Central Bank can rest assured of continued stability.

It is not in our interest to exaggerate the financial strength or weakness of Jordan. Both overstatement and understatement are harmful. It is much better to stick to the facts. Only the objective facts to serve the Jordanian economic interests and support public confidence. The facts indicate that the Jordanian economy is well managed, but it needs continued external aid injections for years to come and deserves substantial relief of debts.

A world beyond order and control

By Theo Sommer

WAS IT only last year that George Bush proclaimed his New World Order. And only at the beginning of March that the victorious president told a cheering U.S. Congress that the Gulf war for the liberation of Kuwait had been the "first test" of this "new world coming into view"? Barely six weeks sufficed to shatter the vision.

The New World Order, if it ever had much of a chance, came to naught on the chilly mountain slopes of northern Iraq. It lost its moral underpinning when the Kurds were callously left to Saddam Hussein's slaughter squads. The Gulf war had been mounted in order to uphold principle — the principle that international borders are inviolable and aggression must not stand. But when Saddam trampled the basic human rights of the Kurdish people underfoot, leaving them only the choice between facing death or suffering exile, between genocide or expulsion, the self-appointed guardians of principle studiously looked the other way.

This saddening triumph of selective morality revealed the Kuwait campaign for what it had been, all along: an unabashed exercise in national self-interest, only thinly veiled by invocations of principle. The misery of the Kurds elicited no comparable response: principle not enshrined in cold calculations of self-interest is a wail.

This is hardly anything new. In fact, it has been the hallmark of all world orders since time immemorial. Expediency rules, and most of the time it rules out moral considerations. This is the way things are. Perhaps it is the way they will always be. But the descent from last January's moral high ground to the moral morass of March was soberingly precipitate. The new dispensation envisioned by George Bush could not survive the tumble.

There is no use shedding too many tears over its sudden demise. From the time the New World Order was first proclaimed, it was a thoroughly flawed concept. It was based on the expectation that, after the Soviet arch-enemy had obligingly dropped out of the race, the cold war would more or less go on, albeit from now on without a specific focus — with the United States riding high, exercising a sort of unipolar hegemony after 40 years marked by an American-Soviet duopoly; Europe and Japan acquiescing in even halting, Washington's leadership, if not dominance; the United Nations gladly dancing to the tune of the American piper (never mind that he had not bothered paying his dues for quite some time); and the turbulent Third World willy-nilly submitting its controversies and conflict to U.S. arbitration.

The unspoken assumption was that American military power, while considerably reduced after the end of the cold war, would serve as the ultimate arbiter; that the industrial democracies would share the financial burden of such arbitration; and that the developing countries, in the absence of another world power to look to for help, would by and large be happy to conform to the views of the only remaining superpower.

The flaws of this concept were obvious from the beginning. There cannot be such a thing as unipolar hegemony. America may feel a disproportionate responsibility to lead, but even its allies will not always and everywhere feel inclined to follow. The United Nations is still a far cry from a world organisation capable of acting under its own steam; but as it gradually gets its act together it is a safe bet that it will be less and less disposed to take its cues from White House cue cards. Maintaining or restoring

"order" all over a globe seething with friction and strife will be beyond the power of any single player on the international stage (most probably even beyond the powers of a United Nations functioning the way it was originally meant to function). Nobody can police the world alone any longer.

At any rate, we are rapidly moving from the territorial-military-political age into an economic-financial-technological age. The yardstick by which we measure the prowess of nations is inexorably changing. The United States, due to its economic, budgetary and societal shortcomings, is bound to lose political and, ultimately, also military clout. All the other states to make relative gains.

The Gulf war does not disprove this analysis. It was a last protruberance of the cold war, by no means a herald of things to come, a paradigm of the future. Henry Kissinger rightly called the anti-Iraq alliance "an almost accidental combination of circumstances unlikely to be repeated." It is vastly exaggerated, then, to depict the war against Iraq as the "defining moment" of the post-cold war epoch. It was nothing of the sort. It shook the world, and the tremors can still be felt. But in the last analysis it was a sideshow of secondary importance.

The most significant event of the past few years was the end of communism and the dismantling of what used to be the Iron Curtain. The Western democracies had devoutly wished for this to occur, had passionately hoped for the overthrow of the Yalta Order, and had shouldered great burdens to bring it about.

Now that it has finally happened, it must be the primary task of all Europeans to help the two long-divided halves of Europe grow together again. Liberty, prosperity and stability for Eastern Europe are the goals. The reality of freedom must not be greyer than the dream of freedom used to be. If the newly liberalised countries east of the old dividing line sink into chaos and destitution, the affluent part of the continent could not long enjoy the riches and the tranquillity it found after the Second World War. So it is in Eastern Europe that the central drama of our age is being staged.

After 75 years of incessant European civil war, making the Old War whole again and, to boot, safe for democracy everywhere is the greatest challenge of our time. Here we can build a truly new order, not in the sands of the Arabian desert. The "defining moment" of the epoch: that was the glorious year of 1989, when Eastern Europe shed its shackles. And the proving grounds of the future order — they lie right next to us, not in distant climes.

When North German merchants pressed Bismarck to join in the scramble for Africa during the 1880s, he long resisted their importuning: "Your map of Africa looks very nice. But my map of Europe lies in Europe. Here is Russia, and here is France, and we are in the middle. That's my map of Europe!" The world has changed since then: global interdependence inhibits the kind of detachment evinced by the Iron Chancellor's dictum that Bulgaria was "not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian musketeer." Yet when it comes to setting priorities, Western Europe might well be advised to take a leaf out of Bismarck's book. Our Near East lies immediately beyond the Elbe, and our Middle East begins at the Bug.

The Gulf war was not the seminal event giving shape and direction to the future. The trends likely to mark the final decade of the 20th century were visible much earlier — and they

will neither be deflected nor overwhelmed by the aftermath of our recent Oriental preoccupations. They were, first, the sustained effort to forge the European Community into "a more perfect union"; second, the impetus to take advantage of progressive détente to bring Eastern Europe into the fold; third, the endeavour to put Europe's relations with both the United States and the Soviet Union on a less threat-ridden basis; fourth, the attempt to demilitarise world politics by pushing for large-scale disarmament; fifth, the need to meet the basic challenges of the 21st century: poverty in the southern part of the globe, environmental degradation, the threat of a climate catastrophe.

It is not easy to discern what will flow concretely from this new agenda. But if one extends the trends listed above to the threshold of the next century, a pattern emerges that deviates significantly both from the dispensation of the cold war and from Bush's concept of a U.S.-centred New World Order.

Europe, however haltingly, will continue its march toward unity. Deepening and widening will of necessity go hand in hand. As the institutionalised ponds grow denser, more time is going to expand. Twenty-four or even 30 EC members by the year 2000 would not seem to be an unrealistic expectation. This number is likely to include most of the present EFTA countries, three or four East European states, perhaps three or four independent republics emerging from the break-up of Yugoslavia, maybe Turkey, Cyprus, Malta.

To cope with the problems such a drastic expansion will cause, and to preserve the political finality of the European enterprise, an a la carte approach is almost inevitable. Not every member must assume identical obligations right away; only a core group will share the commitment to currency union as well as to full-fledged political union. For some time to come, variable geometry will inspire Europe's Grand Design.

Next, the requirements of détente and rapprochement. Preoccupation with problems like the Gulf must not deflect our attention from the central task of the next two decades: helping the East Europeans escape from the prison of their post-war misery. East Germany, Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union — they all need support. While in the former GDR the job can be left chiefly to Bonn, everybody will have to chip in east of the Polish-Czech-Hungarian frontier — and "everybody" includes Japan, which should be seen more and more as an essential partner rather than as a noxious rival. Progression of the Eastern countries to the Community, starting with association and leading to full membership, must be the ultimate objective.

At the same time, the end of the cold war facilitates, even necessitates, a re-ordering of Europe's relationship with both Washington and Moscow. As the military components of power lose their crucial importance and economic factors assume greater significance, it is imperative that NATO, while providing continued reassurance to its 14 European and two North American members, be supplemented by two things: First, other security arrangements under the auspices of the EC or the WEU and second, an additional European-American forum geared primarily to dealing with economic, financial and commercial issues. The more the old military threat recedes, the more crucial will this new entity become, for it is in this field that competition and rivalry may engender conflict. And looking East, the Community cannot but provide venues of and avenues toward co-operation with the Soviet Union. There are compelling reasons to assist Russia's arduous transition from failure to viability. Of course, it is primarily the Russians themselves who will have to steer through that narrow and difficult passage, but they need not only navigational assistance.

Given the tremendous strain on resources everywhere, we can count ourselves lucky that the military element in world politics no longer constitutes the central factor, overriding everything else. Normal times are here to stay. To be sure, we must not let down our guard as long as the irreversibility of the reform process in the Soviet Union is not beyond the shadow of a doubt. But we should not overdo the remaining threat. Germany is united, the Warsaw Pact dissolved. If everything goes according to plan, by 1995 only half a million soldiers — all Western! — will be left on German soil — three years ago

there were 1.5 million (of which 600,000 were Eastern uniforms). And we should not go shopping for new threats. Saddam's potential for evil was vastly overrated. Of the many lurid scenarios bandied about at present none is truly plausible.

The spectre of millions of marauding migrants, the calamity of minor holocausts in the Third World, the menace emanating from the international drug mafia and organised crime, the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism — they are hardly susceptible to military solutions. The much touted global sheriff is a role still looking for a stage. Rapid Deployment Forces may come in handy occasionally, but only in limited contingencies (e.g. Chad). It is hard to imagine that they would ever achieve more significance than, say, the Foreign Legion. Restraint is the order of the day, not interventionism; disarmament is called for, not building up towards imagined new threats.

Arms exports must be drastically reduced, especially to the Third World. The poverty belt of the earth poses a stark problem. Most wars and civil wars of the near future are going to take place there; most ethnic clashes, too, and most violations of human rights. The rich North cannot prevent that, but it is high time for the democracies to stop fueling Third World feuds. Beyond that, refraining from universalising every little regional conflict and refusal to get involved is probably the best course to follow.

In most cases looking the other way instead of being sucked into remote quarrels does not manifest abject cravenness but rather a measure of wisdom. The countries of the North, having settled their own contest should resist the temptation once again to shoulder the white man's burden. They will have to contain the forces of evil rampant in the world but it cannot be their business to eradicate them for the sake of principle.

Principle must not be divorced from vital interest. Moral imperialism would quickly come to be perceived as equally hateful as the classical garden variety of imperialism. The Third World (or rather the several Third Worlds) needs development aid from the North, not military aid, meddling or pious posturing.

Of course, a world order along these lines is quite unsatisfactory. It leaves a lot to be desired, offers no clearly drawn lines, does not promise the millennium. But we might as well bow to the inevitable: The salient features of any new order will be a large measure of disorder, loose ends, untidy arrangements. Interventions — whether for moral reasons or for reasons of expediency — are likely to produce untoward results. Better to shore up what we have than to jump into the pit of open-ended foreign engagements.

The lesson of the Gulf conflict is that you can win a war but lose the peace; that there are no quick fixes; that commitment does not make discrimination superfluous; and that solving one problem frequently means creating two new ones. Holding one's own is one thing, establishing order and control quite another. Much of the world is beyond order and control. That, if anything, is the message of Mesopotamia. The Guardian.

© Copyright reserved. Theo Sommer joined the German newspaper Die Zeit as Political Editor in 1958, and is now its Editor-in-Chief and joint Publisher. He was a lecturer in International Relations at the University of Hamburg (1967-70). From 1969 to 1970 he was Head of Planning Staff at the German Ministry of Defence. He is a member of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik and a Council member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. He is a contributing editor of Newsweek magazine.

New World Order
DENIS HEALEY, Noam Chomsky, J.K. Galbraith, Abdelrahman Munif, Eduard Shevardnadze, Francis Fukuyama, Theo Sommer ... the seven articles forming the Guardian's New World Order series will be published in booklet form, available soon. To order your copy send a cheque or postal order for £3 (payable to the Guardian) to New World Order, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

LETTER FROM BAGHDAD BY HAND

By Lamis Andoni

IN A KITCHEN lit only by a kerosene lamp, members of three generations of one Iraqi family were debating the future of Iraq. The grandfather, the mother and the daughter were in agreement that Saddam Hussein was responsible for the military defeat and had to go. But, like most Iraqis, the three found it difficult to even suggest an alternative leader.

Reminiscing on the good old days of the monarchy, which ended tragically in 1958, the grandfather argued the country was full of good and qualified men. The mother was nostalgic for the old days of Baathist rule in Iraq — when "ideals and not corruption prevailed." The 20-year-old daughter found herself at a loss. She knew no other model than Saddam and he has disappointed her. She detested other Arab leaders who joined the allies in the war against her country but blamed Saddam for the humiliation she felt.

Bushra, as she is called, is an example of a lost generation which grew up under Baathism but never really captured the nationalist spirit that had gripped the first generation of Baathists. They felt alienated from the system which was based on repression and fear. The nationalist slogans that ignited the struggle of their fathers in the 50s and 60s appeared hollow and empty, if not simply a means of coercion by the state.

Yet the system had provided, until the war destroyed everything, the people's basic needs — medical care, education and modern infrastructure. Now they have suddenly to face the Herculean task of rebuilding a devastated country. "The war has taken us sixty years backwards. Why did we have to go through that war," complained Bushra?

Her attitude may be typical of those with a similar, sheltered upper class background, but there is also overwhelming despair in the poor suburbs, where young people, especially those who were at the front, feel crushed. Many are eager to leave the country. Everything they see around them is bleak. For nearly three months Baghdad has lived without electricity and a serious shortage of drinking water. The once bustling streets were deserted for weeks because of the continuous air raids and fuel shortages. Since the ceasefire, the Iraqi capital has become a city of pedestrians — and bicy-

cles. But the collapse of the telecommunications and much of the transport system has separated friends and relatives and increased the Iraqi's sense of isolation.

The young generation appears to be the most in shock. Many feel betrayed both by a leader they once admired — if not necessarily loved — and by the West, whose civilisation — or at least its superficial trappings — they have grown to crave. But if a combination of long suppression of political freedoms and the wave of conservatism which has swept Iraq over the last decade have produced a confused generation, the military defeat, the widespread destruction and the continuing pressures are breaking the spirit of even the intellectual elite which has lost faith in everything.

"The U.S. and the West have no morals ... They do not deal with or care about people," said a 65-year-old Iraqi intellectual, "they were so eager to destroy Saddam ... in the process they have destroyed a nation." When this man recalled the nights when his home in the city shook like "a doll's house" under the intensive bombardment and how he had thought that his son had been killed at the front, he broke down in tears.

But what most pains those who have witnessed the modern evolution of Iraq is their belief that there was a deliberate attempt to completely destroy the country and their feeling that they bare overwhelmed by hostile powers which may not allow Iraq to stand on its feet again. Moreover, many fear that the absence of an enthusiastic, hopeful generation, which could lead the process of change and reconstruction, will open the way to civil war and foreign domination.

The more hopeful, and their number seems to be increasing as Baghdad sees their beautiful city come gradually back to life, argue that Baghdad has been destroyed and rebuilt several times throughout history. "They destroyed our city; they have even taken away the oxygen from our air (due to the hundreds of thousands of tonnes of explosives dropped by the allied forces) but this is Baghdad. Give our people time and we will be on our feet again," said an Iraqi poet in his late 70s, who had taken part in the struggle for independence, and later in the Baathist revolution.

Kuwait

(Continued from page 1)

ably next January at the latest, for parliamentary elections.

"This cabinet is an insult to the Kuwaiti people," an opposition activist said. "They have nothing to do with the people's aspirations. Even if there were elections, they would not be elected."

Before the new cabinet was announced, diplomats suggested it might be postponed until after a visit here next Monday by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to head off the possibility of demonstrations while he was here.

Opposition leaders met Saturday to discuss a proposed letter to Mr. Baker reiterating their demands for democratic reform. They were due to meet again on Sunday.

Radio Kuwait said Information Minister Badr Jassim Al Yagoub, Health Minister Abdul Wahab Suliman Al Fawzan, Higher Education Minister Ali Abdullah Al Shamlan, and Communica-

tions Minister Habib Hayat, a Shiite Muslim, kept their posts. Ibrahim Al Shabeeh — brother of Isa Al Shabeeh, spokesman of the conservative Muslim Brotherhood, but not a member of the opposition group — was named minister of state for municipal affairs.

A former prosecutor general, Ghazi Al Sammar, became justice minister.

Among the new faces were technocrats whose main job will be to rebuild Kuwait.

They included the head of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), Ahmad Al Jassar, who was named planning minister.

Other new ministers were:

Abdulla Al Jaralla, commerce minister.

Mohammad Al Asfour, minister of state for housing affairs.

Abdulla Al Qotami, minister of public works.

Ahmad Al Adasani, minister of electricity and water.

Dhari Al Othman, minister of state for cabinet affairs.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

VERY LITTLE leaked out from the Baker-Shamir talks Friday, but what has come out of the talks underlined two important views in Israel's strategy: No Palestinian from the Jerusalem area should be involved in talks over Palestine, and there should be no United Nations sponsorship of any talks on the Middle East question. Al Ra'i daily said Saturday. The paper said that these pre-conditions were sufficient to undermine the whole American plan before it is given a chance to see the light. Excluding occupied Jerusalem and its Palestinian people from the negotiations clearly means that Israel holds on to its annexation of the Holy City regardless of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which Baker is reportedly trying to implement, and a consecration of occupation of territory by force, the paper noted. It said that Israel's demand that the United Nations should be excluded from the peace process means that Shamir does not want to see council resolutions implemented. This clearly reflects Israel's lack of concern over peace and stability and its continued drive to avoid the prospect of having to succumb to the will of the international community. By maintaining the no-war/no-peace situation in the area, Israel will not only continue to blackmail the Americans into providing it with financial and military assistance, but it also hopes to continue to have a free hand in establishing Jewish settlements on Arab lands, the paper said. Such an attitude, which is clearly hostile to international legitimacy and world peace and security, does not absolve the United States from its duty to see to it that right and legitimacy are established, and its responsibility to deal with the problems of the region on equal footing with other issues so that peace and security can be established.

Commenting on a decision by a cabinet minister to separate male from female employees in his department, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily says that by so doing the minister is treating people like slaves or workers in his own farm. Salamah Ekor questions the wisdom behind such a move which, he says, is totally isolated from all other public and private establishments in the Kingdom. The writer points out that male and female employees mingle in public transport and other public places and their working together in offices has been most beneficial for the members of the public — males or females — visiting government departments all the time on business. Should separating males from females in government offices be generalised, then each department would require separate male and female heads of sections and administrative areas and probably male and female ministers for that matter, says Ekor. Should separation involve public transport separate cars and buses will have to be made available; and both measures would cost the country a fortune which it cannot afford and which can lead to no where except further complications, he argues. Are these the rules of Sharia (Islamic law)? And if so, they should be applied to all sectors with no exception, and in doing so all members of the public should be first convinced of its feasibility and benefit, the writer adds. Ekor says the time has come the men to stop considering women as mere slaves whose duty does not exceed the limits of cooking, raising children and entertaining men.

Unexploded weapons, pollution continue to plague Kuwait

By Jacquelyn S. Porth

KUWAIT CITY — Unexploded Iraqi weapons — mines and other munitions — must be dealt with as quickly as possible before the rest of Kuwait's exiled population returns home, a World Health Organisation (WHO) official says.

Appealing to international community to support Kuwait in its efforts to overcome its massive pollution and weapons problems, Dr. Danel Tarantola noted March 28 that relatively few of the vast amounts of Iraqi munitions and weapons have been cleared by coalition mine-disposal forces despite "the gigantic effort" they have made.

While the sound of constant pounding continues as more and more of Iraq's abandoned arsenal is systematically eliminated, the WHO official acknowledged that it is "technically very difficult to demine the whole area of Kuwait."

Although encouraged by the declaration by the French Daguet detachment that the first segment of a beachfront area in the capital is now "mine-free," Tarantola pointed out that Kuwaitis who have been living outside of the country are unprepared for the hazards left behind by Iraqi. Unexploded ordnance is killing people — usually children — every day, he noted.

It took the French forces almost three weeks to clear an area of sand about one kilometre long due to the heavy concentration of mines, booby traps, barbed wire, bunkers, trenches and obstacles. Working in various parts of the city, the detachment recovered more than 9,300 mines and destroyed 230 tonnes of ammunition.

Tarantola, who heads WHO's relief programme, acknowledged that a long-term effort will be required to eliminate the ordnance. He said he expects some of the coalition demolition experts to continue their work at least through the end of June.

Dr. Michael Gwynne, director of the Global Environment Monitoring System for the United Nations environmental programme, agreed, saying the presence of unexploded objects which litter the countryside in many places will pose an "environmental and social problem for some time to come."

While the sound of constant pounding continues, as more and more of Iraq's abandoned arsenal is systematically eliminated, WHO officials acknowledged that it is technically very difficult to demine the whole area of Kuwait."

Tarantola and Gwynne spoke at a press conference in connection with the work in Kuwait of a team of WHO specialists who are in the country to assess its needs and develop recommendations over the next six to 12 months. During that period, a medium-to-long term plan will be formulated, along with recommendations which will be sent to the WHO secretary general and the Kuwaiti Ministry of Public Health.

The specialists will attempt to determine the effect of the hundreds of burning oilwell fires on Kuwait's people, as well as the atmosphere, climate, soil, wildlife and livestock of the entire Gulf region.

Dr. Hassan Barudi, director of WHO's Regional Centre for Environmental Health Activities, said it is essential to monitor "every possible aspect" of the troubled environment, because there may be further problems that "we don't know about." He emphasised that "citizen participation" will play an important part in the effort.

Dr. Ibrahim Hadi, who works for Kuwait's Environmental Protection Council and with the health ministry, noted that it has been difficult to determine the extent of oil pollution in adjacent Gulf waters because of the continued presence of Iraqi sea mines. Iraq's deliberate spilling of oil into the Gulf and fallout from the oilwell fires have severely damaged the marine environment.

While experts have yet to recommend special precautions for persons in good health, Hadi says those who have heart ailments or allergies should stay indoors on days when pollution levels are extremely high.

Dr. Rashid Al Owish, director of public health in Kuwait, said most of the people who are reporting allergy and breathing problems have had such symptoms in the past. He also noted that pollutants tend to affect peo-

ple in different ways.

While the current situation is not really dangerous Owish maintained, "we don't know what's going to happen later on." He said long-term evaluations may show a possible link between the pollution and cancer and other diseases.

Tarantola said there is no data to suggest that people should be evacuated from the country, even those who live very close to the oil fields, though he noted scientific data should be gathered to monitor the pollution's impact on the population.

According to Gwynne, the Kuwaiti air is visually polluted with smoke, gases and particle emissions. He said there are clearly carbon particles in the air, but no one knows yet about their exact chemical composition.

Noting that some air samples have been sent out of the country for analysis, Gwynne pointed out that while pollution in Mexico City, for example, is largely generated by industry or automobile traffic, the gas emissions in Kuwait present "a very different scene."

Kuwait's oil fire situation is "unique," he said, with no other possible historical comparison. Gwynne suggested that the huge numbers of fires could have a considerable impact on the other countries in the region.

Although mobile laboratories are being set up, it will take time before all their sensitive scientific instruments are calibrated, Gwynne explained, noting that the instruments measure in "parts per million."

Scientists know the composition of the burning oil, he said, but they do not know what is happening to the components "in the burn." At such high temperatures, Gwynne said, the compounds may be safely broken down, but no one knows for sure.

Another problem, the official explained, is caused by the dynamic nature of the burning oil fields. Some well heads are under enormous pressure and burning very hot, while others are drawing up water, which alters the composition of the emissions.

Gwynne said there is considerable speculation about the possible presence of poisonous hydrogen sulphide gas, but he noted there is no data to back it up. He stressed that facts and figures are needed quickly and to obtain

them the Kuwaitis need assistance with laboratories, instruments, and transportation.

In this regard, the United Kingdom is sending a special aircraft which can fly through oil fire smoke plumes and take special measurements at different altitudes. Gwynne said this will enable the scientists to develop a smoke plume profile.

Gwynne said scientists believe that the "visible portion" of the gas emissions has not entered the earth's atmosphere. The pollution tends to be a "low-level phenomenon," he said, hovering at an average of around 5,000 feet. However, he said, weather conditions could push the cloud higher, and he stressed that no one knows if "the invisible particulates" have risen into the atmosphere.

Asked about the possible effects of Iraqi-generated pollution on the global climate, Gwynne said when the dense smoke could appear overhead it causes the ground in Kuwait to cool rapidly and it does not reach until the cloud temporarily disperses and the sun reappears. While this creates a local cooling trend, he said, it should not have any effect on other parts of the world.

Concerning the effects of the pollution on wildlife, the official said the team has not seen any deaths attributable to the oil fires. But much of the country's wildlife does not seem to be visible, he said, noting that the specialists have seen few birds "in urban Kuwait."

The air pollution problem will end once the oil fires have been extinguished, Gwynne said. But he pointed out that another concern is the long-term damage which may have been done to Kuwait's soil and vegetation, not only from liquid oil lakes and exploding mines, but from the passage of massive, heavy, Iraqi and coalition armoured vehicles — U.S. Information Agency.

Scholars see problems for post-war Middle East

By Berta Gomez
USIA Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — A group of Middle East scholars brought together to discuss different aspects of the Gulf war and its aftermath held out little hope for a serene and prosperous post-war period.

They were also sceptical about the possible expansion of political freedoms in the region, although most noted the growing calls for democracy in several states.

These experts participated in a two-day symposium sponsored by Georgetown University's Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies, on two of the three panels that held discussions on April 18. Three additional panels of experts spoke on April 19.

Making up the first panel were Shamlan Al Essa, a professor at the University of the United Arab Emirates; Bouthaina Shaaban, an associate professor at Damascus University; and Jo-Anne Hart, assistant professor of political science at Brown University.

The second group included Phebe Marr of the National Defence University; John Duke Anthony, president of the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations; and Hanu Faris, a fellow at the University of British Columbia's Institute of Asian Research.

The most pessimistic assessment of the post-war period came

from Mr. Jo-Anne Hart. Countering those who claim the Gulf war is "over," she noted that its direct consequences will continue to wreak havoc with the lives of Iraqis and their neighbours for the foreseeable future. "The Middle East," Hart said, "is far worse off as a result of the war."

She described the regional economic fallout as overwhelming. Not only will the cost of repairing war damage be huge, but predictions of lower oil prices could mean that all of the Gulf states will see their income significantly reduced.

According to Hart, those financial constraints will be felt throughout the Middle East and the rest of the Muslim World.

Countries that previously received generous foreign aid from the Gulf states can expect those payments to fall. More importantly, there will be less money available to pay foreign workers in the Gulf region. Given the fact that for many Arab and Muslim states "those remittances account for their economic independence," their loss could be devastating, Hart said.

She added that her predictions were tentative and that the results of the Gulf war could be less severe, but stressed that she was not optimistic: "The bottom line on the consequences (of war) is that I hope we've seen the worst, but I fear that we have not."

In contrast, Phebe Marr's discussion of the situation inside Iraq focused much less on the conflict's physical damage than on what she called the "emotional trauma" suffered by the Iraqi people.

Marr took issue with a recent United Nations report that described Iraq as having been bombed back to the "pre-industrial" age, and asserted that "there has been extensive damage in some areas but not in others."

She argued that if it were possible to restart Iraq's electricity grid — perhaps using generators — then many of the most severe problems facing the Iraqi people could be eased. Most significantly, they would be able to reopen water purification plants. Marr also claimed that reports revealed only "minor damage to" Iraq's agricultural and light industry sectors.

On the other hand, Marr stressed that "the human and social costs of this war are a lot higher." Not only did the war reduce the number of healthy young men available to help reconstruct Iraq, but "the population itself is in a state of trauma," Marr said.

The massive flight of the Shi'ite and Kurdish refugees further complicates the situation in Iraq, and "creates a destabilising factor all along (its) border," Marr said. Among other things, "It gives Turkey and Iran the means and

motive to interfere." Similarly, the new enclaves which will be protected by western forces "are an infringement of Iraq's sovereignty... (and create) a new and volatile situation" in the country, she added.

Although Marr claimed that Saddam Hussein has lost whatever popular support he may have had, she predicted that the most likely scenario is for him to remain in power indefinitely. "Iraq's future is at best painful," she said.

For his part, Hani Faris suggested that one way to ameliorate Iraq's suffering is to "begin the healing process" as soon as possible. For humanitarian reasons, as well as to shore up regional stability, he suggested that the coalition partners "should not treat Iraq as an outcast nation."

Faris also predicted that any extended U.S. military presence in the Gulf region would have deeply negative repercussions. "People will forget why the Americans came in the first place... Their presence will be dubbed imperialism," he said.

Addressing the issue in more general terms, Faris expressed concern that the creation of the multilateral coalition and the very introduction of U.S. troops into the Gulf region only worsened problems that already exist among Arab states.

Some Arabs, he said, believe that the western and Arab allies

exhibited a "dominant/subservient" relationship during the war. "The Arabs lost control of the situation" once they invited the westerners in, Faris said.

He noted that while some Arabs strongly support Washington's efforts to broker a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, others have misgivings. For those Arabs, Faris noted, the question is: "does the United States mean to apply the same standard of decency elsewhere that it... (applied) to Kuwait?"

Looking at a regional politics from a different perspective, John Duke Anthony focused on Syria, and the new role it seems to have carved out for itself.

He noted that prior concerns about Syria's role as a supporter of international terrorism have been eased — not only by its willingness to participate in the anti-Iraq coalition, but also by its evident interest in playing a constructive role in the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Moreover, Syria's "important window to Iran and ongoing relationship with the Soviet Union" increase its importance as a regional player, Anthony added.

On the question of democracy, and the prospects for greater political freedom in the Gulf region, Shamlan Al Essa said he believed that the pro-democracy movement would not gather enough strength to force real change.

However, he said there were clear signs of growing discontent with the status quo. "The failure of existing regimes to deal with the (Gulf) crisis" convinced many that "the only way not to have any more Saddam is to have more political participation," Essa said.

Essa acknowledged that he was "not very optimistic" about the prospects for democracy in the Arab World, but suggested that the transformation of only one state could be significant. A democratic Kuwait — where there is "a real popular demand for political participation" — could serve as a model for other states, he said. "Its success could lead to change in the Gulf."

One change in the Arab World that deserves more recognition, according to Bouthaina Shaaban, is the increasingly important role of women — especially in times of crisis.

She noted that women have participated in the Palestinian uprisings that have taken place in the Israeli-occupied territories and that the only public protests held in occupied Kuwait were led by women. In these, as well as in other cases, Shaaban said, "women are the unacknowledged soldiers" of the Arab World.

She expressed hope that the Gulf crisis will make possible a comprehensive reconsideration of their role.

Aqaba talks

(Continued from page 1)

pluses as well as the minuses — and discussed ways in which we can, in the future, strengthen that relationship in an effort to try and bring it back to the status which it enjoyed in the past."

Answering questions, in reference to the Gulf war, King Hussein said: "...During these dangerous times, we were able to keep our two countries (Jordan and Israel) out of war... we have to work hard so that this window of opportunity (for a regional settlement) is not lost."

On the question of Palestinian representation in peace negotiations, the King said the Palestinian component in the Middle East problem "must be addressed by the Palestinians themselves." But he left the door open for the setting up of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation provided Jordan is asked by the Palestinians.

"We are really looking very open-minded at everything," the monarch told reporters. "It's been my dream and my hope to see an end to this tragic chapter."

Asked whether Jordan was ready to join a peace conference, King said:

"I believe that the secretary was kind enough to refer to our talks and refer to question of taboos. Well, personally I have never believed in all those that have passed, that these taboos should be an impediment to making real progress to the attainment of peace. I do not know what its name will be, will it be a peace conference — will it be... this is still something the secretary is involved in and many friends in the world are concerned with. I believe we should move away from old clichés. We should set our rights to ensure that this window of opportunity is not lost. And when you have a situation where people are people

who have been under occupation for so many years and they have been on a regular basis have had to deal with Israel and meet with Israel. I mean what makes one a better Arab sort of stay out of it and say that I am a better Arab because I am not involved? No! The question is not one of meetings and contacts or taboos or not; the question is one of responsibility and the times ahead and I believe that if these were some of the impediments that have been there they should be removed. People should talk. There have been many stories and many suggestions about contacts and meetings but nobody has ever been able to say that we gave in to Palestinians rights. The Palestinian dimension has to be addressed by the Palestinian people. We will support them: We are talking now about a possibility of a conference if you want to go at their own way we are ready to support them; if they want to approach us to be a part of a joint delegation, if it begins with a conference, ends with a conference, fine we will look at that. I think we have to be flexible enough, imaginative enough. There has to be a process of education regarding peace, both on the level of Palestinians and Israelis, the Arabs and Israelis. What does peace really mean? What does it offer this region in terms of the present and in terms of the future? So, believe me, we are looking very open minded at everything and we will not let if we can, and we suggest to others not to stick to old clichés and create obstacles. Let us join together in terms of trying to look at the future and what are our responsibilities are towards future generations and try to find the solutions that as responsible people we are here to try to find."

Mr. Baker's visit was his first to Jordan since relations were strained during the Gulf crisis. "The talks focused on ways to achieve a peaceful settlement in

the Middle East and means and ways to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people," said a Jordanian official.

Afterwards, Mr. Baker left Jordan for Cairo, third leg of his latest Middle East tour aimed at finding a middle ground between Arabs and Israelis.

The Aqaba meeting was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Mudar Badran, Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri and other close aides of the King.

Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

struggle is closer to a happy end, we have to go on believing in our cause and in our unity in order to make this optimism a reality."

No progress seems to have been made on the role of the PLO. When asked about this Mr. Hussein said that the U.S. position remains the same which is that their dialogue with the PLO is suspended and not terminated. When asked about the role of Arab Jerusalemites Mr. Hussein said that he an Arab Jerusalemite has attended every meeting with Mr. Baker.

Palestinian participants were careful to qualify their statements by saying that they were not negotiating but merely involved in exploratory meetings. They said that they will relay what they heard to the PLO decisionmakers who alone will determine what positions to take. The apparent success in the third gathering with Mr. Baker will certainly strengthen the position of political pragmatists during the Palestine Central Committee meetings which begin Saturday.

Following is the text of a petition the Palestinians gave to Mr. Baker: Having reviewed the content and consequences of our previous meetings with you, as well as all other relevant follow-up talks and efforts, we would like to point out the following:

While the Palestinians have demonstrated a genuine commitment to peace through the PLO's sustained efforts at maintaining a positive dialogue and open channels with the U.S., we are still witnessing a per-

versely obstinate and destructive Israeli response which is manifested in two ways: First, Israel persists in expanding and intensifying its settlement activity and its confiscation of Palestinian lands, while pursuing a policy of terrorism, cruelty and repression against the Palestinians under occupation. Second, Israel is imposing unacceptable conditions and constraints on the peace process, thereby dictating its own priorities and parameters as preconditions for its participation in the process. Both are capable of rendering Palestinian participation impossible, and are particularly subversive in that they might be perceived as tainting the American position and charged with complicity, or at best, with inefficiency. Unless these Israeli policies and measures are firmly checked and halted, the atmosphere will be poisoned with hostility and mistrust, any confidence in the impartiality and fairness of the process will be totally eroded, and the prospects for genuine peace will be seriously jeopardised.

Of special relevance in this context is the victimisation of Palestinians in Kuwait — an issue of particular urgency and moral responsibility which must be solved immediately. We urge the U.S. administration to intervene actively and forcefully to put an end to the detention, torture, killing, and expulsion of members of the Palestinian and other non-Kuwaiti communities in Kuwait. The political and moral credibility of the U.S., especially in view of its active role and presence in Kuwait following the Gulf war, is at stake. A firm and uniform stance vis-a-vis human rights violations everywhere must be adopted and applied. The plight of the Palestinians under occupation is rendered even more intolerable by the suffering of the Palestinians in Kuwait. Human rights are universal, and "confidence building measures" recognise no boundaries. The peace process must be based on uniform standards of justice, and must be pursued within the framework of legitimacy, comprehensiveness, and foresight.

On the issue of representation, we uphold our right to choose our own legitimate leadership and to designate our own credible interlocutors. Once again, we would like to reemphasise our allegiance to the PLO, our sole legitimate leadership, and our conviction that only the PLO is empowered to represent, lead and sign agree-

ments on behalf of all the Palestinian people. Any lasting, comprehensive, and just peace must be based on the recognition of this fact.

The substance of the peace process must deal with the implementation of U.N. resolutions and the national rights of the Palestinian people, without digressing into issues of subjective interpretation or being made subservient to Israel's priorities and its de facto exercise of domination and control.

The mechanism of the peace process in the U.N. sponsored international conference, and the comprehensive integrated approach, remains crucial to the fulfillment of the rights and needs of all parties involved. A full and sustained European participation during the whole course of the process is essential for ensuring its success and for laying the foundations for enhanced regional cooperation and development.

From the outset, the issue of assurances and guarantees must be addressed and settled in order to prevent Israel from shifting the goalposts, carrying out punitive measures against the Palestinians, violating any interim agreements, or sabotaging the process in any other way.

A legal frame of reference has to be adopted clearly and openly for the whole process, based on international legitimacy, and binding on all participants. The Palestinian delegation must have recourse to a fixed legal reference especially in the prevailing conditions of asymmetry in power. In addition, the whole process of negotiations as well as the period of implementation of agreements must be carried out within that legal framework.

The objectives of the peace process require lucidity and unequivocation. The "land for peace" formula must mean an end to the illegal Israeli occupation of all the territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, the capital of the future Palestinian state. Israeli withdrawal and the exercise of Palestinian sovereignty over the liberated Palestinian lands constitute essential components of any genuine peace process. The Palestinian right to self-determination, the right of return, the right to independence and to the control of our own lands and resources are basic to the exercise of sovereignty.

We understand that these meetings with you constitute exploratory steps

for the purpose of launching a genuine and effective peace process in the right direction and with the participation of genuine representatives. They must not be misconstrued as either negotiations or tacit agreements. The painful and unjust conditions of occupation and the plight of the Palestinians in Kuwait unfortunately continue to undermine the possibility of any real peace process and to destroy any confidence in its potential success so long as these inequities are allowed to prevail."

S. Arabia

(Continued from page 1)

ni Mubarak and the foreign minister. They agreed in principle last week to Arab-Israeli negotiations.

The likelihood that Saudi Arabia and several other Arab states would not participate surfaced Saturday despite the Saudis' prominent role in the U.S.-led coalition to liberate Kuwait from Iraq.

After the U.S. sent 540,000 troops to Saudi Arabia it was widely assumed the Saudis would be at the negotiating table in any post-war peace negotiations with Israel.

Mr. Baker said at a joint news conference at Aqaba that "it is not because Saudi Arabia is refusing anything."

Rather, Mr. Baker said, "I think there is a feeling on the part of the sometimes called front-line states, the states neighbouring Israel, that the issues in dispute are issues that affect Israel and those states, and issues that affect Israel and Palestinians."

"If you bring other Arab states to the table at the same time, where do you draw the line?"

U.S. officials did not specify the front-line Arab states expected to participate in the talks. Presumably, they would include Syria, Jordan and Egypt, and possibly Lebanon.

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Holyfield retains title after 12-round battle with Foreman

ATLANTIC CITY (R) — Evan-der Holyfield won the fight but George Foreman retained his dignity at the end of their 12-round battle for the undisputed world heavyweight title.

Holyfield kept his crown Friday night with a unanimous points decision and proved he could take hard punches without panicking and abandoning his fight plan.

The champion also took another step toward gaining the respect he and his corner feel has eluded him.

Foreman, a 4-1 underdog, was a winner by merely being 42 years old and giving a very creditable account of himself over 12 brutal rounds against a man 14 years his junior.

"He won the fight. I proved a point. I came within inches of winning the title," Foreman said. Some of the lack of respect for Holyfield comes because he won the title from a fat and unmotivated James "Buster" Douglas last October.

The other key reason is that he has not defeated former champion Mike Tyson, who for many boxing fans is the true heavyweight champion.

Now it would appear that if the two promoters, Don King for Tyson and Dan Duva for Holyfield, can bury the bitterness between them, Holyfield's next challenge will be to fight Tyson. "It was a good night for me," said Foreman, whose face appeared puffy at the post-fight

press conference. "I proved to the whole world you don't have to be ashamed of being a senior citizen."

Foreman, who earned \$12.5 million for his efforts, said: "I thought I had him a few times. You tried to finish him, he'd finish you. He's a tremendous champion."

"I had him a few times, not to mention he had me too. I didn't intend to do it," a proud Foreman said.

Foreman rocked Holyfield several times in the fight, but the champion had Foreman in trouble as well.

Several times Holyfield, who received \$20 million for defending his title, was able to land furious combinations to the head almost at will.

Holyfield appeared to be close to chopping down the 257-pound (116.5 kg) Foreman in each of the third, seventh and ninth rounds, but the fiercely determined challenger, although wobbly at times, refused to fall.

"Every time I had him hurt the bell rang," said Holyfield, who weighed 208 pounds (94.3 kg). "I hit George with all I had."

For five years I hit guys with all I had they went out." He didn't.

"I found out I couldn't run him over," Holyfield said. "I had to be tactical."

"At 42 who would think George would go 12 rounds with me and fight a furious pace?" "The toughest thing about the

fight was the pressure George put on," Holyfield added. "It was relentless pressure. He forced me to stand in there and take punches I shouldn't take."

One of the surprises of the fight was that it went 12 exciting rounds.

The theory had been that if the fight did go 12 rounds it would mean Holyfield was running away from an exhausted Foreman.

But it was one of the most competitive heavyweight title bouts in recent years. Both fighters at times appeared to be close to victory.

"There is no dignity lost," Foreman said of his performance. "The boy is a fine champion."

Holyfield said he saw no reason to fight Foreman again, but later Duva said: "If the public wanted it we would do it again."

Foreman said he did not know whether he would retire and give up his bid to become the oldest man to win a heavyweight championship.

Earlier Friday, heavyweight Tommy Morrison, who played a boxer in the movie Rocky V, remained unbeaten Friday night by stopping Yuri Vaulin of the Soviet Union in the fifth round at the Convention Center.

Morrison, however, was not impressive in running his record to 27-0 with 23 knockouts.

Vaulin had the best of the first four rounds, rocking Morrison several times in the third and raising a mouse under his right eye.

Midway through the fifth round, Morrison landed a right to the ribs and Vaulin turned away and went to the ropes, where he was given a standing eight-count.

A short time later, Morrison landed another right to the ribs. Vaulin again grimaced, clutched his side and went to the ropes, and the referee stopped the match at 2:06 of the round.

A computer analysis of the match, a preliminary to the Holyfield-Foreman heavyweight title fight, was outpunched 131-55.

It was the sixth straight bout inside the distance for Morrison, 223 pounds (101 kilograms), of Kansas City, who is ranked No. 8 by the World Boxing Association (WBA).

Vaulin, 209 3-4 pounds (95 kilograms), from Latvia, lost for the second time against 10 victories.

A 10-round lightweight fight between Jorge-Paez of Mexico and Lupe Suarez of Corpus Christi, Texas, ended in a technical draw after four rounds when Suarez couldn't continue because of a bad cut over his right eye. The bout was ruled a technical draw because it hadn't gone halfway.

It was the first fight as a lightweight for Paez, 135 pounds (61 kilograms), who is a former International Boxing Federation featherweight champion. Suarez weighed 133 pounds (60 kilograms).

Bjorn Borg comes out of retirement Tuesday

MONTE CARLO, Monaco (Agencies) — Bjorn Borg is back.

Returning to tournament tennis at the age of 34 after an eight-year retirement, Borg will play in the Monte Carlo Open on Tuesday.

"I'm back, it's the name of the game," Borg said when asked about first-round opponent, clay-court specialist Jordi Arrese of Spain.

The pairing was determined in Friday's draw.

Borg did not know much about

his opponent, but said at this stage of his career, "they are all tough."

Arrese figures to be a tough opponent, especially for someone away from home.

The 26-year-old Spaniard beat France's Guy Forget, the world's fourth-ranked player, two weeks ago at Barcelona. He is ranked 54th in the world after being as high as 28th last year.

Arrese won consecutive clay court tournaments last August at San Remo, Italy and Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Borg has played just three official matches since 1981. He won five Wimbledon and six French Open titles between 1974 and 1981.

Stefan Edberg, Boris Becker, Forget and Andre Agassi all drew first-round byes.

If Borg does get by Arrese, the next opponent will be Yugoslavia's Goran Ivanisevic, seeded fifth, who also received a first-round bye.

Borg practiced against Ivanisevic Wednesday and won a set from the world's eighth-ranked

player.

Borg said in a French TV interview that his comeback had nothing to do with money.

"It is about knowing whether I can do it again."

"I don't know if I look the same but I do feel the same as 10 years ago, both mentally and physically."

"I know that expectations are very high and that people expect me to play good tennis again. I was able to handle pressure in the past. I hope I can still do it."

Monaco closes gap on league leaders Marseille

PARIS (R) — Monaco closed the gap on French League leaders Marseille, who were held to a disappointing 1-1 draw at bottom of the table Rennes Friday.

The club from the principality won 2-0 at struggling Sochaux to trail Marseille by only two points with four matches left.

The French champions, who have a game in hand, appeared absent minded in Brittany, only five before their European Cup semifinal second leg against Spartak Moscow.

France's top marksman Jean-Pierre Papin brought his season's tally to 23 goals thanks to a cross by England's Chris Waddle in the 16th minute.

Marseille then relaxed while Rennes did their utmost to upset the leaders and prove their lowly status was far from deserved.

Former Marseille player Patrick Delamontagne took advantage of a blunder by Marseille's goalkeeper Pascal Olmeta in the 54th minute to equalize.

"This sort of match between the leader and the bottom-placed is always tricky to handle. But our first aim was not to lose and above all not to be injured before Wednesday's match," Papin said. Italian clubs including AC

Milan, Juventus and Roma sent officials to monitor Papin, Waddle, Ghana's Abedi Pele as well as Rennes' Cameroun striker Francois Omam-Biyik.

Monaco had a much easier task against 15th-placed Sochaux.

Liberian striker George Weah opened the scoring in the 13th minute in a solo raid and Portuguese Gil Rui Barros made in two with a header in the 75th.

The victory almost certainly secures Monaco a berth in the UEFA Cup next season.

Meanwhile near-bankrupt Bordeaux were thrown a lifeline Friday when a French court accepted a plan for financial backing that could save the first division soccer club from relegation.

A Bordeaux court, which had previously rejected five other rescue bids, accepted a plan by former Vice-President Jean Didier Lange to take over the club whose debts are estimated at 300 million francs (\$60 million).

Under the plan, Lange, a close aid of businessman Alain Afflelou, one of three club presidents in the past six months, will pay 20 million francs (\$4 million) for the club.

Seles, Fernandez reach semifinals in Houston Slims

HOUSTON, Texas (R) — world number one Monica Seles and second-seeded Mary Joe Fernandez swept to easy victories to advance to the semifinals at the \$350,000 Virginia Slims of Houston.

Seles will play sixth-seeded Sandra Cecchini of Italy, who pulled off the biggest surprise of the tournament when she rallied to upset defending champion and fourth-seeded Katerina Maleeva of Bulgaria 3-6 6-4 6-1.

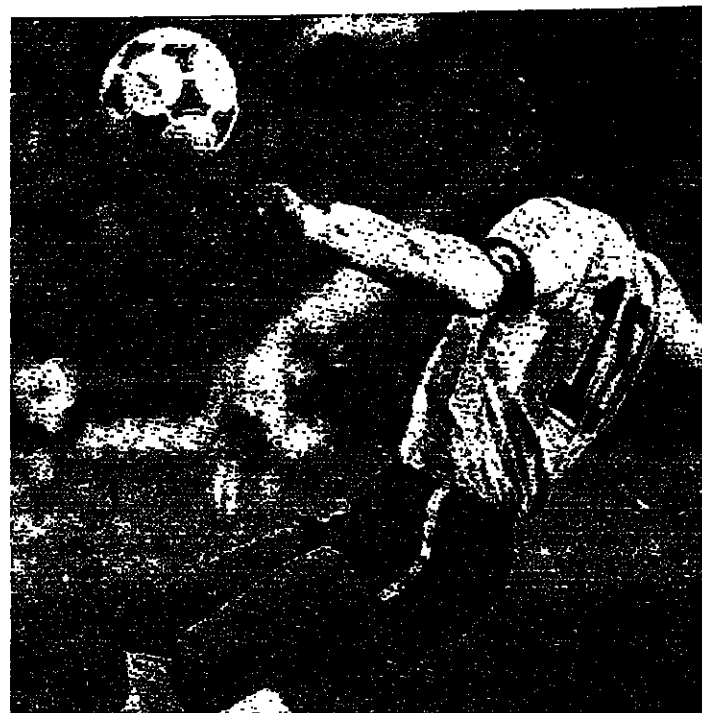
The top-seeded Seles, 17, displaying her usual punishing two-handed groundstroke game, won the last 11 games to power past unseeded Federica Bonsignori of Italy 6-1 6-0 in 49 minutes.

Fifth-ranked Fernandez played her first match of the tournament and struggled past unseeded fellow American Ann Grossman 7-5 7-5.

Fernandez faces Linda Harvey-Wild, a 6-4 6-1 victor over fellow American and doubles specialist Gigi Fernandez.

Seles and the 40th-ranked Bonsignori held serve, but that's as close as the Italian would get during the straight-set blowout on the clay. Seles ran off 19 of the final 24 points to claim the set.

"As soon as I got out there I wanted to make as quick as I could," Seles said of the match that was delayed 1 hour and 49 minutes by rain.



Diego Maradona

Italian Soccer Federation upholds ban on Maradona

ROME (R) — A 15-month ban on Napoli's Argentine star Diego Maradona for doping was confirmed by the Italian Soccer Federation (FIGC) Saturday.

"The suspension of the footballer Maradona is confirmed," the federation said in a one-line statement.

The FIGC turned down an appeal by Maradona's lawyer Vincenzo Siniscalchi against the ban handed down on April 6 and extended worldwide by the International Football Federation (FIFA).

Maradona tested positive for cocaine after Napoli's home league game against Bari on March 17.

He left for Buenos Aires six days before the April 6 ruling.

The Argentine World Cup captain said in January he wanted to retire.

The FIGC appeals board turned down Siniscalchi's argument that Maradona, 30, had not taken the drug to enhance his performance.

Napoli, who were not held responsible, did not file an appeal on behalf of their former captain.

Maradona was in trouble with Napoli and the FIGC throughout the season, receiving fines of about \$50,000 for missing training and matches without permission.

He also became involved in a court probe into an international drugs and prostitution ring operating in Naples.

Magistrates questioned him after his name was mentioned in police recordings from tapped telephone conversations.

Maradona's career seemed finished when he faced a ban of up to two years after a second test on the urine sample taken after the Bari match showed positive on March 29.

But the 15-month suspension handed down the following Saturday by the Italian Soccer League's Disciplinary Committee, effectively banning him from soccer until the start of the 1992/93 season, seemed to give him a ray of hope.

Argentina's national team boss Alfio Basile told Maradona he was welcome to train with his squad whenever he wanted.

But Maradona said he was tired of the commitments in soccer and wanted to dedicate time to his family.

Maradona Thursday reiterated that he was quitting soccer. In a television interview Thursday, he said: "I've been thinking about it for years."

"I don't want any more training camps. I want to start living, take my daughters and my wife on walks, be with my mother or go fishing with my father."

"The thing is not having to wake up every Sunday thinking we can't lose (a match) or that we must win or draw. Now my happiness is being with my family."

Novacek out of Nice Open

NICE, France (R) — Karel Novacek of Czechoslovakia, the only seed left in the \$250,000 Nice Open Tennis Tournament, made his exit to Martin Jaito of Argentina in a tight semifinal Saturday.

Sixth seed Novacek saved five match points before losing 4-6, 6-4, 7-6.

Jaito looked to have the match in hand when he broke serve early in the final set but Novacek broke back to level at 5-5.

The Czechoslovak saved two

more match points when he trailed 6-2 in the tiebreak but Jaito finally won it 7-4.

The Argentine was kept waiting to find out his opponent in Sunday's final when rain stopped play shortly after the start of the other semifinal between Cedric Pioline of France and Goran Prpic of Yugoslavia.

Cedric Pioline of France beat Henri Leconte 6-2 6-4 Friday in the quarterfinals of the Nice tournament.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY APRIL 21, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Getting more rest than usual today will partially protect you from exercising poor judgement but the best plan for now is to avoid being backed into a corner where you must decide now.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You want to get off to new scenes and new personalities but you have many duties to finish and wind up that require your undivided attention.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) This is your day to carry through with the things expected of you in way they want them to be done in an exact and particular manner.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Think out the partners you want the most to allied with in the days ahead and then do the things that they would appreciate to bring them closer.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You find you have all kinds of services to render to others so put away that desire to laze about and get into what will please others.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This is the day when you want to have a good time and it is possible if you forget your own desires long enough to get approval of close contacts.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Take a good look around your home and see what you can do to

make it more attractive as well as please members of your own clan who are worried.

LIBRA: (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) This is the day for you to get off to some lectures of good ideas that can serve your best interests in the future and get rid of any opposition.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Your finances seem to be running out of you do not have enough to do the things that mean the most to you so think out ways to increase them.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You have a restless urge that actually is a divine discontent pushing you into some worthwhile activity to have only good things for you.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) You are now on the plane of consciousness that wants more and more friends, which is all right so long as you do not let your practical affairs suffer.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You are now on the plane of consciousness that wants more and more friends, which is all right so long as you do not let your practical affairs suffer.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You find that there is an official position is expecting more of you than you feel you can carry through with so make a point to live up to this as well as you can.

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



"This came over the fax machine. I think it's from your wife."

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DOLDY

EGUSS

TELBOT

USUBED

Answer: DOLDY, EGUSS, TELBOT, USUBED

THE

Answer: When that dude is "taken in," he's apt to be this — "PUT OUT"

Yesterday's Jumbles: CLEFT MOUND JURIST UPKEEP

Answer: When that dude is "taken in," he's apt to be this — "PUT OUT"

Answer tomorrow

Answer: When that dude is "taken in," he's apt to be this — "PUT OUT"

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Answer: When that dude is "taken in," he's apt to be this — "PUT OUT"

GOVERNOR BRIDGE

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1980 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

SUPER SACRIFICE, LARGE PROFIT

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

Q 8 6 5

A Q J

K 5 2

WEST

4

10 9 7 3 2

7 6

J 8 6 3

SOUTH

K Q 10 9 5 3

K 4

K 10 4

10 9

The bidding:

South West North East

1 Pass 2 NT Pass

3 Pass 4 Pass

Pass Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♣

A par contest at the World Bridge Olympiad was won by Benito Garozzo, star of Italy's many world championship winners in the 1960s and '70s. He made his first appearance in a similar contest 33 years ago, in London, where the hands were devised by Terence Reese and Harold Franklin. Not many experts today would find this deal from the event an insoluble defensive problem.

South should rebid the six-card

major with an essentially balanced hand to offer North a choice of contracts. With three-card support, North's preference for the major-suit game is automatic.

Statistics confirm strikes crippling Soviet economy

MOSCOW (R) — Detailed figures released by the Soviet state statistics committee Goskomstat Friday confirmed spreading strikes and unrest are crippling the country's economy.

In the first three months of 1991, compared to 1990, Gross National Product (GNP) fell eight per cent, productivity dropped nine per cent, foreign trade slumped by a third.

"It can be supposed that the universal fall in economic activity witnessed during the first quarter will continue," Goskomstat said. A growing wave of miners' strikes as well as disruption to traditional economic links caused by secessionist republics trying to break ties with Moscow have brought the economy to the verge of collapse.

On Monday the Soviet parliament is due to start discussing a tough anti-crisis programme which includes a moratorium on all strikes and a ban on protests in working hours.

It also calls for tough action against republics which have been demanding greater autonomy or independence and withholding contributions from the central Soviet budget.

President Mikhail Gorbachev Monday said that if the strikes were stopped immediately, it would be too late.

"The figures for the first quarter bear witness to the extremely complex and contradictory economic situation in the country," Goskomstat said.

Brief excerpts from the figure, carried by the official TASS news agency, were released Thursday.

Economic production has been falling steadily over the last two years but the latest figures show the decline into a nosedive.

The miners, who have closed around a third of the country's 600 pits, want big rises and Gorbachev's resignation.

"The signs of crisis in the economy spread to virtually all spheres," Goskomstat said. "Strikes cost 1.169 million working days in the first three months of the year."

The strike has also cut re-

serves of cooking coal for the key metallurgical sector — on April 1 they were only 800,000 tonnes, half the amount available on the same day in 1990.

Goskomstat said production of consumer goods and food — both in very short supply across the country — was falling.

"The consumer market is in crisis: Panic buying has grown, especially towards the end of the quarter, virtually all goods are in short supply and speculation is growing," it said.

But this was not the only bad news for the already hard-pressed population — collapsing oil production, the country's main hard currency earner, helped cut imports by 45 per cent in the first quarter compared to 1990.

The country also risks running up a huge budget deficit, because most of the increasingly independence-minded Soviet republics, especially the giant Russian Federation, have slashed contribution to the central budget.

"Implementation of the union budget in the first three months has been extremely unsatisfactory," Goskomstat said.

Republics have only contributed 39 per cent of planned payments to the central government budget and the first quarter deficit of 26.9 billion roubles (\$45.3 billion) already exceeds the planned maximum for the year of 26.7 billion roubles (\$45 billion).

Moscow Radio said the Russian government's own plan for economic reform, which includes plans to quickly sell off enterprise and encourage foreign investment, would soon be submitted to the republic's parliament for approval.

But this is likely to cause conflict with the Kremlin, which says it still controls many of the resources and enterprises on Russian territory which the republic's government plans to privatise.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian coal miners in the seventh week of a strike to force the resignation of Gorbachev welcomed the support of factory workers at a rally Friday.

Nationwide, thousands of fac-

tory workers, outraged by steep price rises which took effect on April 2, have stopped work to boost the protest by an estimated 300,000 miners.

In the Ukrainian coal town of Donetsk Friday, hundreds joined miners in the central October Square. Waving the blue and yellow Ukrainian flag, they vowed not to return to work until Gorbachev quits.

"We are not forcing people to go on strike but they are joining us by their own choice," said Viktor Osovsky, a leader of the Donetsk strike committee, sitting in an office decorated with photographs of Russian Federation leader Boris Yeltsin. Gorbachev's chief political rival.

"We are coordinating our action and trying to create a region-wide strike organisation," he said.

"I have never been involved in politics before," said Ludmila Radchenko, 57, one of 10,000 workers at a textile mill who went on strike Monday.

"But I worked for 18 years on a salary of 120 roubles. Since prices went up, it's become impossible to survive," she said, as colleagues chanted slogans against the Communist Party.

The average Soviet salary is 270 roubles a month (\$465) at the official exchange rate — \$10 at the tourist rate and workers have been given a minimum supplement of 60 roubles to cover increases in the cost of food, clothing and most other staples.

The director of the textile mill, who declined to give his name, said his work force walked out after miners visited the plant.

"During a lunch break, a representative of the miners' strike committee visited our factory and the collective decided immediately to go on strike," the director said.

"It's unlikely we'll return to work any time soon," he added.

Thousands of workers from a Donetsk plastics factory also joined the miners' strike this week. Negotiations were under way to try to stop the action spreading to the region's giant steel mill, which employs 20,000 people.

Nationwide, thousands of fac-

Yugoslav premier warns of economic anarchy, devalues currency by 30 %

BELGRADE (R) — Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic said Friday the country was on the verge of civil war and economic anarchy and devalued the dinar by just over 30 per cent to try to halt the collapse.

In a keynote speech to parliament setting out economic policy for the rest of the year, Markovic also called for federal elections to complete Yugoslavia's transition to democracy after free elections in its six republics last year.

"National conflicts are of such dimensions and vehemence and motives that the public is constantly being kept on the verge of civil war," Markovic said.

"There has been a process of erosion of the system which by the end of last year led to its virtually complete collapse and a complete blockade of the reforms we had begun," he added.

He attacked the republics for blocking his Western-style economic reforms, such as privatisation of property and restriction of money supply, as part of their battle for independence from central rule.

He appealed to the republics to halt moves they have made towards secession and accept his programme for keeping the economy running until they solve their bitter political rows that threaten to tear the country apart.

Otherwise, heavily-indebted Yugoslavia could miss out on a \$1 billion standby loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that would unlock about \$5 billion in loans from other international lenders, he said.

"This is a chance we must not miss," he said.

"From Luxembourg, Washington, London, Paris, Rome, Moscow and others the message is clear: Only a unified Yugoslavia within existing borders and with consistent implementation of economic reforms

can have its place in a united Europe," he stressed.

The key policy change was a 30 per cent devaluation of the dinar's fixed exchange rate to 13 dinars to the Deutschmark from a rate of nine to one.

This was intended to increase exports and improve the trade deficit, which was more than \$4.5 billion last year.

Markovic said reforms had reached their most critical stage and painted a grim picture of economic decline.

He said annual inflation was likely to be 60 to 70 per cent this year. That would be less than the 120 per cent in 1990 but much more than the 40 per cent he predicted in December.

He said he would limit public spending and reduce the federal budget to 138 billion (\$9.2 billion at the old exchange rate) — 7.7 billion dinars less than the original target set last December.

Markovic also called for banking reforms along Western lines, faster introduction of market forces in the economy and an end to resistance over privatisation, particularly by the republics of Slovenia, Croatia and Montenegro.

The republics, "in the interests of their own victories, have often and unscrupulously supported resistance to the transformation of society," he said.

Parliament will start debating his programme next Wednesday.

Markovic aides and the media have suggested he may seek a confidence vote if his plan is rejected but the prime minister said he was determined to carry on, even though Croatia has said it rejects his programme.

"You can be sure the government is still ready and able to put its human professional and moral energy at the disposal of all citizens with the aim of ensuring economic success and political freedom for all of us," he said.

China tries new venue to sell government debt

BEIJING (R) — In one of the most important economic reforms since hardliners took power in China two years ago, the government Saturday signed a deal with an underwriting syndicate to issue state bonds.

About a quarter of all government bonds issued this year to cover the government deficit will be underwritten by a syndicate of 58 members and marketed with an attractive interest rate to the public.

Previously the government has forced workers to buy treasury bonds by docking their pay, a measure that has provoked intense resentment and threatened industrial unrest.

The total amount of treasury bills to be issued in 1991 is 10 billion yuan (\$1.8 billion). The move was described as an

experiment in market-oriented policies at a news conference Saturday, where details of the issue were announced.

"Last year the market for government bonds was fairly good so this year we are issuing a portion (through underwriters) as an experiment," said Wang Yuhua, an official at the People's Bank of China.

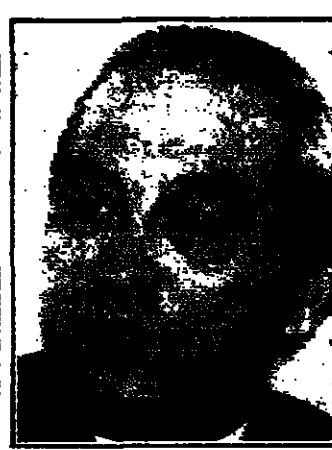
"The experiment is an attempt to find a more market-oriented mechanism for the distribution of government debt issues," a statement issued at the news conference said.

It said the aim was to make state debt more attractive to investors.

Economic reform was stopped dead in its tracks after June, 1989, when the army crushed a student-led movement for democracy. Since then hardliners have stressed state control and socialist orthodoxy in economic affairs.

No figure was given for the interest the three-year bonds will carry, but sources close to the syndicate said it would be 10 per cent, which is currently the rate for three-year bank deposit rates. However, the sources said the bank rate was likely to be lowered to eight per cent, with an announcement possible as early as Sunday. This would virtually guarantee the success of the bond issue.

Officials said that if all does smoothly, the finance ministry would expand the portion of state debt issued through underwriters in future years.



Karl Otto Poehl

Bundesbank rules out interest rate cut

FRANKFURT (R) — Germany's central bank issued a series of tough new warnings on inflation Friday, saying monetary policy had to stay tight to defend the mark.

Ignoring U.S. calls for lower interest rates, Bundesbank President Karl Otto Poehl said there was no scope for the Bundesbank to ease policy. He was speaking after the mark had fallen to its lowest level against the dollar since early 1990.

But comments from another top Bundesbank official seemed to suggest German interest rates did not need to rise further.

Deputy President Helmut Schlesinger said recent high wage deals and government plans for higher taxes were not on their own reason enough for the Bundesbank to change monetary policy.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady complained this week that high interest rates were stifling world growth.

Poehl said recent wage deals and high public borrowing were increasing risks to inflation. "Germany cannot avoid tight monetary policy and relatively high interest rates."

Both Poehl and Brady are due to attend a meeting of Group of Seven (G-7) finance ministers and central bank governors in Washington next week.

Schlesinger told German television the trend for German raw material prices had been favourable, although inflationary risks remained.

"The negative factors alone are not a compelling reason for a change in policy," Schlesinger said.

There had been speculation the Bundesbank could raise interest rates at a meeting Thursday. But it left policies unchanged.

Bundesbank officials were adamant there would be no relaxation of monetary policy. Poehl said the central bank aimed to defy predictions that inflation would rise to average 3.5 per cent this year.

West German consumer prices rose 2.5 per cent in the year to March.

Schlesinger said the Bundesbank was not happy with the current dollar/mark rate. But he stressed the dollar was generally stronger and there was no specific mark weakness.

The dollar reached highs of 1.7280 marks on Friday morning, its highest level since late January 1990. It closed in Frankfurt on Thursday at 1.6800.

Brady says U.S. will pursue other creditors to cut Egyptian debts

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady Saturday urged Egypt's creditors to follow Washington's lead and write off half of Cairo's foreign debt obligations.

Writeoffs by the United States, oil-rich Arab states and a few smaller creditors already have lowered the outstanding Egyptian debt by almost one-third, to around \$35 billion.

Brady, on a 12-day tour of Europe and the Middle East, spoke to reporters after a one-hour meeting with President Hosni Mubarak. "We told the president we are most keen to continue to work on debt reduction (for Egypt)," Brady said.

Late last year the United States forgave military debts totalling \$6.7 billion in gratitude for Egypt's active role in the Washington-led alliance against Iraq. Wealthy Arab states in the coalition wrote off \$7 billion owed by Egypt.

Noting this, Brady said: "We will now work with our colleagues in the Paris Club and elsewhere to see if we can extend the debt reduction to other (creditor) countries."

The Paris Club, an informal group of Western creditor nations, considers debt relief for countries deemed creditworthy by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The United States wields considerable influence in the club, which includes other members of the so-called Group of Seven, the world's leading

industrialised nations.

At a recent meeting, the Group of Seven decided to forgive 30 per cent of debts owed by Egypt and Poland. Paris Club members then agreed to halve Poland's estimated \$33 billion debt to them.

Egypt has reached tentative agreement with the IMF on economic reform that includes cuts in government subsidies for commodities and services and higher fuel prices.

The package goes before the IMF board in Washington for approval next month. Once it is accepted, Egyptian officials expect the Paris Club to meet around May 20.

"The Paris Club will be meeting in the near future and we hope other countries will follow the U.S. lead and extend debt reductions themselves," Brady said.

Asked whether reductions would be as high as 50 per cent, as Egypt hopes, Brady replied: "That would be the goal. We are hopeful that terms can be extended much the same as the debt reduction that was granted to Poland, which was a very unusual debt reduction programme."

Brady said he and Mubarak are "optimistic about this country's future." He expressed confidence that Egypt's "economic performance will improve over time" as a result of the reforms negotiated with the IMF.

The reforms, he added, will open the way for Egypt to receive new development credits from other countries.

United States remains biggest U.N. debtor

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United States, which has recently found new favour for the United Nations, is also the U.N.'s biggest debtor.

The United States a decade ago sharply criticised the world body as a Soviet tool and Third World debating society, but recently has touted its usefulness and is working within the U.N. system for U.S. political ends.

During the Gulf crisis, for example, U.S. officials frequently cited U.N. resolutions as justification for their actions.

Officials of U.S. President George Bush say the country is committed to paying all U.S. arrears, despite economic hard times.

"President Bush is fully committed to making all our current payments and arrears and we intend to work closely with the executive branch and Congress on ways and means to ensure that our U.N. obligations are fully funded," a State Department official said.

On Monday congressional leaders said U.S. budget constraints may hamper efforts to pay off U.N. debt.

U.N. diplomats see a test of the reborn U.S. commitment to the United Nations. Because of policy differences, the United States over the years has withheld some U.N. assessments, including those aiding the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the South West Africa People's Organisation.

U.S. officials are quick to point out that despite its arrears, the U.S. contributes enormously, more than any other nation.

Of the annual \$1 billion U.N.

budget, the United States contributes one-quarter, the highest share allowable. In 1990 the U.S. government paid \$1.12 billion to the United Nations, its agencies and other international organisations.

U.S. officials also don't agree with the amount the United Nations says the United States must pay.

While the United Nations says the U.S. government owes \$567.7 million in dues and arrears, the United States says it owes only the arrears of \$296.1 million. It argues that 1991 dues of \$271.6 million are not due until Congress provides the funds after the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.

U.N. officials say the U.S. government also owes \$150.1 million for peacekeeping forces, while the United States says its back dues total \$132.4 million, and its assessment for 1991 is \$68.9 million.

That does not include the newest Iraq-Kuwait peacekeeping force, expected to cost the United States about \$38 million or 30.69 per cent of the total cost of \$123 million for the first year. The United States pays about 31 per cent of all U.N. peacekeeping contributions — more than any other nation.

For the Iraq-Kuwait border force, the United States has promised to pay its share, along with Britain, China, France and the Soviet Union. The five permanent members of the Security Council will be serving together in peacekeeping forces for the first time. The border monitors were mandated by the Gulf war ceasefire resolution adopted earlier this month.

Philips warns restructuring benefits may be delayed

AMSTERDAM (R) — Philips, Europe's biggest consumer electronics group, has said stagnant sales could delay benefits from a major corporate restructuring programme.

N.V. Philips Gloeilampenfabrieken said it still expected to report a profit this year after losing 4.24 billion guilders (\$2.27 billion) in 1990.

But Chairman Jan Timmer cautioned in the company's

annual report that benefits from the restructuring undertaken last year might show up later than expected.

"The possibility cannot be ruled out that, as a result of stagnating sales, the positive effects of the changes will manifest themselves somewhat later than we originally anticipated," he said.

"They will, however, already become clearly visible in 1991,"

Timmer said.

Analysts and dealers said investors were disappointed that the company's long-awaited recovery may be further delayed.

"They seem to be postponing the restructuring gains by a few months. That doesn't please people," said Roel Goossens of brokerage Van Meer James Capel.

The overhaul, which began last year, includes up to 35,000 job cuts, reorganisation of several divisions and discontinuing unprofitable activities. The company took charges of 4.65 billion guilders (\$2.5 billion) in 1990 to pay for the restructuring.

In February, Philips said it expected benefits from the programme to begin to show up in the second half of 1991.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Saturday, April 20, 1991				
Central Bank official rates				
	Buy	Sell		
U.S. dollar	681.0	685.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	492.2 495.2
Pound Sterling	1172.3	1179.3	Dutch guilder	348.1 350.2
Deutschemark	392.2	394.6	Swedish crown	109.9 110.6
Swiss franc	463.8	466.6	Italian lire (for 100)	53.2 53.5
French franc	116.4	117.1	Belgian franc (for 10)	190.9 192.0

TODAY AT

Cinema **RAINBOW** Tel: 625155

★ **BEST OF THE BEST**

Show: 3:30, 8:30 p.m.

★ **SAMIRA BADRAN AFFAIR**

Show: 6:30

Cinema **CONCORD** Tel: 677420

★ **PRETTY WOMAN**

Show: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

★ **KAFROON**

Show: 11:30, 1:30 p.m.

Cinema **NIJOM** Tel: 675571

Adel Imam...in **Dangerous recorder** (Arabic)

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema **PHILADELPHIA** Tel: 634144

Madonna & Warren Betty in **DICK TRACY**

Show: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

★ **THE FOX & THE HOUND**

Show: 11:30, 1:30 p.m.

Cinema **PLAZA** Tel: 699238

Lalla Elwi in **THE INTOXICATED** (Arabic)

Show: 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

★ **LIVE HARD**

Show: 10:30, 12:00, 1:30, 3:00

Jordan Times

Tel: **667171**

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A full time opening is available at a travel agency for a group operator (female assistant).

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Dental assistant needed.

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Well furnished roof (small flat) with telephone, color TV (central antenna) separately centrally heated and consists of: One master bedroom and one 2-single bedroom both with built-in oak cupboards. Large sitting/dining room with L-shaped bar. Well-equipped American kitchen (washing machine, dishwasher, oven and refrigerator)

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Gorbachev hints at support for South Korea's U.N. bid

SOGWIPU, South Korea (R) — Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev ended a relaxed South Korean visit Saturday with a nod of support for Seoul's long-held desire to join the United Nations and appeals for economic and political cooperation.

The 17-hour visit, held appropriately at South Korea's favourite honeymoon resort, was the first trip ever made to Korea — North or South — by a Soviet leader. It came only seven months after Moscow and Seoul opened diplomatic relations.

"This year the Soviet Union and the Republic of Korea have walked a long distance in a very short time," Gorbachev told reporters at a briefing on Cheju Island off the southern tip of the divided peninsula.

Gorbachev arrived in South Korea late Friday following a disappointing four-day visit to Japan. He met South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo for 95 minutes Saturday and left for home in mid-afternoon.

In an atmosphere of cordiality in marked contrast to his chilly visit to Japan, Gorbachev called for more trade and suggested both countries, once bitter enemies, conclude a treaty of

friendship and cooperation.

South Korean officials, said Gorbachev understood Seoul's desire to join the United Nations and agreed with the principle.

Gorbachev also said he agreed with South Korea that a nuclear safeguards treaty and international inspection requirements.

"The two presidents share the same views on these two (nuclear and U.N. matters)," Kim Chong-Whi, Roh's national security adviser who was present at the talks, told reporters after the meeting.

"President Gorbachev... expressed his understanding of President Roh Tae-Woo's position in view of the universality principle of the United Nations," said presidential spokesman Lee Soo-Jung.

"They agreed to consult through exchanges of visits for foreign ministers on this issue and other issues of mutual concern," Lee said.

Soviet newspapers Saturday put a brave face on President Mikhail Gorbachev's disappointing visit to Japan, saying that although the trip produced few concrete results it had paved the way for future cooperation.

"Japanese society, as well as our own people, should understand the great improvements in Soviet-Japanese relations which took place as a result of Soviet president's visit," the Communist Party daily Pravda said.

Gorbachev left Tokyo empty-handed Friday after tough negotiations during which the two sides could only agree to continue discussing a territorial dispute which is blocking better ties and large-scale Japanese aid to Moscow.

Pravda, which described the talks as a breakthrough, said it was important to have good relations with a country which was becoming one of the most influential in the world.

"This economic colossus is now starting to gain a corresponding political standing on the world stage," it said.

The Tokyo talks ended in deadlock after Gorbachev ruled out the return of four small islands which the Soviet army seized at the end of World War II.

Japan has made it quite clear it will not grant much-needed economic aid to Moscow until the islands are handed back. But the two sides did manage to sign a joint declaration

agreeing to discuss the reduction of Soviet military presence in the four islands and other related questions.

Komsomolskaya Pravda doubted the agreement would bring immediate benefits but said the door to mutual understanding had been opened.

"Our leaders are probably disappointed that they did not succeed in getting credits," Konstantin Sarkisov, an expert on Japan, told the newspaper.

But the Defence Ministry daily Krasnaya Zvezda, opposed to the return of the islands, said the visit had been successful and described the joint declaration as a powerful political document allowing the two sides to broaden their cooperation.

"If there is any disappointment, I think it is groundless," wrote correspondent Captain V. Kuzmar from Tokyo.

The daily Rabochaya Tribuna also described the talks as successful, saying the abnormal relationship between Japan and the Soviet Union had finally been ended.

Pravda said it had been unrealistic to expect economic aid until the chaotic Soviet economy had been sorted out.

Washington to establish first official presence in Vietnam

HANOI (R) — The United States has agreed to establish its first official presence in Communist Vietnam and on the need to normalise relations with its former enemy, U.S. General John Vessey said in Hanoi Saturday.

He said in a joint statement with Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach that Washington would establish a temporary office in Hanoi to resolve cases of American soldiers who were missing in action (MIAs) or prisoners of war (PoWs) during the Vietnam War which ended in 1975.

"In keeping with the discussions we had in Washington, we agreed that the United States would establish a PoW-MIA field office in Hanoi on a temporary basis," Vessey told reporters.

Vessey, reading the joint statement after two days of talks with Thach, said both governments wanted to normalise relations and would continue talks.

"Minister Thach and General Vessey both reaffirmed their governments' desire to normalise relations and agreed on the importance of continuing discussions to resolve differences between them," the statement said.

"They agreed that it would be

useful for them to meet again, at a date to be determined."

But Thach gave a noncommittal answer when asked by reporters whether he had agreed to a plan presented by Washington under which it would normalise relations with Hanoi in exchange for Vietnam's cooperation in ensuring a United Nations peace plan succeeded in Cambodia.

"I have not accepted and I have not rejected," he said.

Vessey and Thach were officially meeting over the MIA issue, which Washington sees as a stumbling block to normalisation.

It wants Hanoi to help account for 2,278 American soldiers who went missing, were taken prisoner or were known to have been killed in Indochina, including 1,661 in Vietnam.

The joint statement said Vessey had expressed U.S. appreciation for Vietnam's cooperation in improving efforts to resolve the MIA issue.

"At the same time General Vessey expressed the hope that even further progress and greater results can be obtained in the future," it said.

Washington says the biggest stumbling block to normalisation is the Cambodian conflict. It wants Hanoi to make its ally

Phnom Penh back the U.N. peace plan which provides for disarmament of Cambodia's army and of guerrillas backed by China, the United States and other Western countries before elections.

Western diplomats said the U.S. delegation expected a response from Thach during its visit to a four-phase plan presented in Washington last week to Vietnam's U.S. ambassador.

Under Washington's 30-called "roadmap" to normalisation, Vietnam would have virtually to ensure peace in Cambodia before Washington would normalise relations.

The U.N. plan would have to be implemented, Cambodia's warring factions disarmed, elections held and a National Assembly formed before Washington would fully normalise ties with Hanoi.

Western diplomats in Hanoi said Washington was demanding too much of Vietnam and that Hanoi officials were discouraged over short-term prospects of normalising ties.

But Thach told reporters a foreign news report saying he would harden his position against Vessey had been baseless.

Hardliners call for Gorbachev's removal

MOSCOW (AP) — Hardline leaders called Saturday for Mikhail Gorbachev to be removed from the presidency, accusing him of squandering his power and allowing the nation to approach catastrophe.

"What we need is a state of emergency, but Gorbachev will never do this," said Col. Viktor Alkin, speaking to a conference of the hardline Soyuz Group. "The only way out for us now is to collect signatures to convene a special parliament session" to remove the president, he said.

The demand came during a weekend conference where a diverse group of Communist Party members, hardline lawmakers and other right-wing activists were discussing strategy in the midst of the political paralysis gripping the country.

The meeting came five days before a plenum of the Communist Party Central Committee was expected to discuss Gorbachev's position as chief of the 18-million member organisation.

"The country is in a state of crisis and is approaching catastrophe," Yuri Blokhin, leader of the Soyuz Group, told the 700 delegates to the conference. Blokhin urged the delegates to approve a resolution calling for a six-month state of emergency across the Soviet Union.

He said the state of emergency would suspend republican parliaments and create a direct line of authority from the Kremlin to local officials; re-establish strong central control over all factories and halt private enterprise by small businesses; repeal the unpopular 3-month-old sales tax; reverse recent price increases on basic consumer goods; and ban all rallies and opposition political groups.

"If the government doesn't take these steps, Soyuz is ready to take all responsibility," for putting these measures into effect, he said.

The Soyuz Group claims more than 700 members in branches across the country. It was founded last fall as an umbrella organisation for disgruntled hardliners who thought Gorbachev was allowing fragmentation of the country by secessionist republics. It has evolved into the largest organised conservative force demanding Gorbachev's resignation.

De Klerk arrives in London

LONDON (AP) — South African President F.W. De Klerk arrived Saturday for a weeklong visit to Britain, Denmark and the Republic of Ireland to press for a further easing of sanctions against his country.

The president flew into Heathrow Airport from Johannesburg, accompanied by his wife Marika, amid tight security. Armed police officers, some with machine guns, stood guard.

The president's visit not officially scheduled to begin until Monday.

He was expected to spend time with his son Willem, 24, who is studying business at Cambridge University. Willem made headlines last year when he became engaged to Erica Adams, 24, who is labelled "coloured" by South African law.

A South African embassy official refused to discuss the matter. "Anything not on the official agenda will be regarded as strictly private," he said.

De Klerk's main protagonist in reform talks, African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela, was scheduled to arrive in London Wednesday for a meeting that day with Major, the South African Press Association reported.

On Monday, De Klerk will talk for the first time with Prime Minister John Major, whose government has continued the strong anti-apartheid line of his predecessor Margaret Thatcher.

De Klerk planned to press for an additional relaxation of sanctions against South Africa, in response to his efforts to dismantle its apartheid system of racial segregation, an embassy spokesman said.

Kremlin underestimated Chernobyl disaster, Soviet marshal says

MOSCOW (R) — A senior Soviet army officer has said the Kremlin had underestimated the scale of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster, which soldiers fought to control as the world was kept in the dark.

Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, who coordinated forces involved in the clean-up operation, said President Mikhail Gorbachev was told of the accident the day it happened — April 26.

At a meeting held to mark the fifth anniversary of the world's worst nuclear disaster, he said he believed Gorbachev and others did not realise at the time how serious the consequences were.

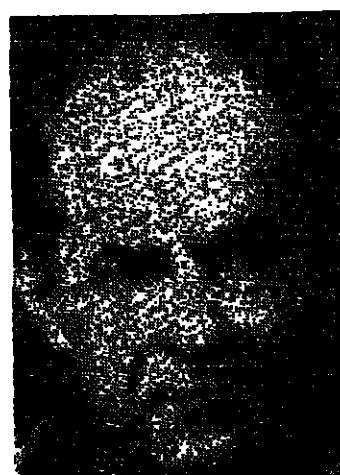
"I got the impression that they underestimated the real scale of the accident... as far as the consequences were concerned, people did not have a full picture of it," he said.

Soviet authorities maintained a virtual blackout on information for almost three days after the fourth reactor at Chernobyl exploded, killing 31 people in the immediate aftermath.

Thousands more may have died from the radiation which spilled across western areas of the Soviet Union.

While the disaster alarmed millions throughout the world, Gorbachev kept silent until making a televised speech 18 days after the accident.

Akhromeyev, an adviser to Gorbachev, said 180,000 people



Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev

had been evacuated from the region and the disaster had cost the country 20 billion roubles (\$35 billion) at the official exchange rate.

"The scale of the accident was enormous and of course the scale of the losses to our country was enormous," he said.

"Without exaggerating, I can say that the work done during the first month and a half was like during the war."

Running down the dramatic hours after the explosion, Akhromeyev, then army chief of general staff, told veterans of the clean-up campaign he remembered that day as clearly as June 22, 1941 — the day Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union.

"These were the two most fateful tragedies in my life in which I took an active part," he said. "The Chernobyl disaster is still a tangible threat to this country."

He said he learned of the explosion at 2:20 a.m. — about an hour after the accident occurred — and summoned other military commanders.

At 3:30, Akhromeyev and his aides checked what troops and civil defence units were deployed around Chernobyl and sent military transport planes to pick up a special regiment.

At 6, he was told the fire had been extinguished but there had been an explosion at the fourth reactor which released more radiation. "By this time, it was already clear to me how dreadful the consequences were. I am not a chemical specialist but, as a general, I was well aware of the consequences."

At 7:30, Akhromeyev reported to the defence minister on what had happened and he approved the measures taken. Akhromeyev also contacted the government and KGB security police.

At 9:30, he called Gorbachev and reported to him. Gorbachev said he had already known about the disaster and also approved the military deployments.

At mid-day, it was clear the wind was blowing west and there were enormous areas of contamination.

Curfew lifted in capital of Azerbaijan

MOSCOW (AP) — An overnight curfew in the capital of Azerbaijan was lifted, 15 months after it was imposed in the wake of fatal unrest.

The curfew was imposed in Baku by the Soviet parliament on Jan. 20, 1990, a week after Azerbaijanis attacked ethnic Armenian residents of the capital. More than 170 people, including Soviet troops, were killed in the unrest.

Azerbaijan President Ayaz Mutaibov issued a decree lifting the overnight curfew, according to the Soviet News Agency (TASS) and the Azerbaijani News Service (ASSA).

A state of emergency that was imposed at the same time remains in effect, however, according to

ASSA. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev sent about 17,000 troops to Baku to put down a nationalist uprising and anti-Armenian riots that began in the republic on Jan. 13, 1990. The unrest had its roots in centuries of hostility between Azerbaijanis, who are mostly Shi'ite Muslims, and Armenians, who are Christian.

At the heart of the dispute between the neighbouring republics is the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, a mainly Armenian enclave that has been controlled by Azerbaijan since 1923.

In the latest violence in Nagorno-Karabakh, an abortive attempt was made Friday to blow up a convoy of trucks near

Stepanakert, the enclave's administrative centre TASS reported. There were no injuries.

Also Friday, an aide to Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan said Soviet Interior Ministry troops were being sent to the Sharmyran district in Azerbaijan, north of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Mostly Armenians live in the district, and many are being deported from their homes, said the aide, Alexander Ambartsumyan.

Armenians have been claiming that the government of Azerbaijan has been systematically deporting Armenians from areas of Azerbaijan, including Nagorno-Karabakh, as part of an effort to keep control of the regions.

Soviet problems hit supplies to Cuba

HAVANA (R) — President Fidel Castro says arms and fuel supplies to Cuba are being hit by economic and political turmoil in the Soviet Union at a time when the island is most threatened by the United States.

He told a political meeting in Havana Friday that Cuban troops were experimenting with coal and sugar cane leaves as emergency alternatives to fuel for armoured cars and tanks in case Soviet supplies dried up completely.

He said the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the rapid allied victory in the Gulf war had increased U.S. hostility towards Communist-ruled Cuba.

"We're threatened by the U.S. and all the more so at this time

when it is acting like the owner of the world," the 65-year-old leader said in a three-hour speech marking the anniversary of the failed U.S.-backed Bay of Pigs invasion against Cuba in 1961.

Castro said the problems currently affecting the Soviet Union, Cuba's main ally and economic supplier, were creating "colossal difficulties" for the island and were disrupting supplies of arms.

"We will need more arms than ever before and we will not be able to have more arms than ever before," he said, without giving details of the arms shipments affected.

It was the first time the Cuban leader had spoken of the effect on

Cuba's defence capability of the disruptions to supplies from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Castro praised his country's armed forces for the way in which they were maintaining a high state of combat readiness while reducing consumption of fuel and other scarce materials.

The Soviet Union has said it will continue to maintain a military presence in Cuba for as long as the island is threatened by its powerful neighbour.

Castro said Soviet supplies of key raw materials such as wood and metals had fallen off almost to nothing, although shipments of oil and food were still arriving.

U.S. refuses to return Soviet space reactor

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico (AP) — When Soviet officials brought a model of one of their spacecraft reactors to a scientific convention here in January, it was considered an unusual sign of international nuclear cooperation.

When the Soviets agreed to sell a working model of the Topaz 2 reactor to a U.S. research group, that was considered even more extraordinary.

But when the Soviets tried to take their model back home, that was another story. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) said the Soviets couldn't have their model back.

The commission says the Soviets had unwittingly exported the model to the United States. To take it back home would be to

export it a second time — this time out of the United States, regulators say. Exports of nuclear technology are strictly limited under U.S. law and international treaty.

It doesn't matter that the display model of the space power plant is designed, built and owned by the Soviets, NRC spokeswoman Sue Gagner told the Albuquerque Journal in a story published Friday.

"There are no provisions in the Atomic Energy Act for exhibits or things coming in for display. According to our reading of the Atomic Energy Act, this is an export," Gagner said.

At the symposium on space nuclear power systems in January, a U.S. research consortium

announced that it would buy a working Topaz 2 to help develop a similar system in the United States.

The deal was made in conjunction with the Federal Strategic Defence Initiative Organisation.

Richard Verga, director of key technologies for the so-called "Star Wars" programme, said the new NRC stand has caused "some embarrassment and consternation." His office as well as the State Department and Commerce Department are trying to work out a solution with the NRC to let Topaz go home, he said.

"It's totally ridiculous. It's their own equipment," said Joe Welch, president of International Scientific Products.

Dhaka fights diarrhoea as death toll nears 400

DHAKA (R) — A searing heat-wave and poor sanitation were partly to blame for a diarrhoea epidemic that has killed about 400 Bangladeshis and afflicted 25,000 since early March, health officials said Saturday.

They said more than 100 medical teams, including some from Dhaka's International Cen-

tre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research (ICDDR), had been sent to the affected areas to step up the fight against the disease.

"We are trying our best to contain the disease but the rate of success is very slow," one doctor in the coastal district of Patuakhali told reporters.

EC official floats 'a la carte' membership plan

BRUSSELS (R) — A top European commission official floated a plan Friday which could allow up to a dozen East European and other countries to join the European Community (EC) on an affiliate basis.

The proposal, a response to the lengthening queue of countries wishing to join the EC, could change the face of the Community by allowing new members to participate in selected areas.

"Two areas in which affiliate members could become active at an early date are political cooperation and monetary affairs," Frans Andriessen, a vice-president of the EC's Executive European Commission, told a business group.

He said affiliate membership could also provide a link with the European monetary system.

EC sources said Andriessen, who is in charge of external relations, made the proposal on a personal basis and did not appear to have discussed it in depth with colleagues in the 17-member commission.

Diplomats described the idea as a trial balloon and said it could complicate talks among the 12 EC governments over political

union and the extension of the bloc's brief to foreign and security policy.

"It sounds totally unfeasible," said a diplomat involved in the current EC talks. "It would be a Europe with a 20-speed gearbox."

The community is working to do away with internal barriers to the movement of goods, services, capital and people by 1993 and says it will accept no new members before then.

Austria, Turkey, Cyprus and Malta have formally applied to join the EC and Sweden has said it will do so soon. Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland are negotiating association agreements in the hope of full membership in future.

The EC is also negotiating an accord with the countries of the European Free Trade Association — Austria, Switzerland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and associate: Liechtenstein — which would give them a say in EC decisions.

Under Andriessen's proposal, affiliate members would have the same rights and obligations as those of the 12 full members, but only in areas covered by an individual agreement.

Mitterrand brings Romania in from the cold

BUCHAREST (R) — French President Francois Mitterrand has brought Romania in from the cold, breaking its isolation with a state visit during which he threw his full support behind the post-Communist government.

Ten thousand supporters of President Ion Iliescu's National Salvation Front (NSF) gave Mitterrand a rousing welcome Friday when he visited Iasi, an Iliescu stronghold near the Soviet border, at the end of the tour.

"Long live France, long live Mitterrand and Iliescu," shouted the crowd.

In Bucharest anti-government protesters, including 2,000 polytechnic students, had booed and jeered Mitterrand for backing the ex-Communist. Some de-

monstrators threw eggs at the French entourage.

Romania has been shunned by other Western countries since pro-government violence last June for which opposition groups blamed Iliescu.

"I feel there is a definite return to democracy in Romania and nothing I have seen or heard here can contradict this feeling," Mitterrand told reporters.

It was the first visit by a foreign leader since Romania's December 1989 revolution, which ended four decades of one-party Communist rule and toppled Stalinist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

During the visit, the two countries agreed to draw up a treaty of friendship and cooperation within the new European security

framework which has been emerging since the collapse of communism and the end of the cold war.

Agreements were signed to set up a Romanian-French management institute to help Romania's transition to a market economy and to create a youth exchange programme.

The French company Bouygues said it was linking up with Romanian enterprises to build a \$110-million trade centre in Bucharest, the first of its kind in central Europe and the biggest joint venture reported so far with a foreign firm.

Iliescu told a news conference Mitterrand had invited Romania, the only East European nation

with a Latin tongue and a strong affinity to French culture, to join a November conference of Francophone countries in Paris.

In a speech to the Romanian parliament, the French president dwelled on his own scheme for a European confederation in which he said Romania should be included.

Mitterrand's trip was marred by several protests by Romanian opposition groups which said the visit was ill-timed.

He dismissed critical questions by local journalists, saying: "I am not the one who elects the people to run this country and I am not the one who chooses the people in opposition... Romania's internal affairs are not my concern."

COLUMN

Hecklers fail to disrupt Pope's speech

ROME (AP) — A small group of protesters shouted and whistled at Pope John Paul II as he addressed students outside Rome's La Sapienza University. State television said the hecklers were not university students but were apparently led by a group of feminists. Some of the 2,000 to 3,000 students in the crowd intervened and convinced the hecklers to stop, the broadcast said. It was not clear what the hecklers were shouting, but a few of the protesters held a banner which read: "Love one another but with contraception." The Pope continued his speech without pause.

Flight attendants fake hijacking

DETROIT (AP) — A newlywed Lebanese-American couple complained that two Usair flight attendants dressed like Arabs and faked an in-flight hijacking, frightening them so much they cut short their honeymoon. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Usair said they were investigating, and the airline said it will crack down hard if it confirms the incident on the Jan. 26 flight from Pittsburgh to West Palm Beach, Florida. Joe and Saran Fawaz told the FAA in a complaint that two male attendants wore fake Arab headresses and glasses with attached rubber noses and herded two female attendants down the aisle with a cloth covered stick that looked like a gun, said FAA operations manager Joseph Stevens. "This is a hijack. Take this plane to Baghdad," Fawaz, a 26-year-old gas station manager, quoted the men as saying. "My wife was petrified when it happened," he told the Detroit News. Fawaz said his wife arrived in the United States just eight months ago and speaks little English. "I told her to calm down," he said. "I tried to explain to her, 'this is a joke.' She looks around, and it's like everybody's laughing at us. We were the only Lebanese couple on the plane. It wasn't a joke."

Man jailed for marital rape

LONDON (R) — A court sentenced a man to five years in prison for raping his wife in Britain's first such conviction where a husband lived with his wife at the time of the assault. The court in Winchester, southern England, threw out a defence argument that it was not a crime for a man to force his wife to have sex if he lived with her. The ruling reinforced a legal principle established in Britain last month that men do not have an automatic right to sex within marriage. "Although at the end of the 19th century a man had a right to have sex with his wife, over the last 30 or 40 years that has been whittled away by judicial decisions," Judge Christopher Rose said. "Now, a month after an appeal court ruling, it no longer exists," he added. In the earlier case a court convicted a man of raping his estranged wife, overturning the principle laid down in 1736 that married women are obliged to have sex with their husbands. The latest decision removes a man's impunity from prosecution for rape in cases where the couple live together. The 27-year-old man, who was jailed, raped his wife at knife-point and threatened to kill her if she did not submit. The victim told the court she was raped after they had a row about money and she threatened to walk out.

California lotto jackpot produces 10 winning tickets

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — The richest lottery jackpot in U.S. history — \$117 million — will be split among 10 winning tickets, California lottery officials said. Thirty-one members of a northern California bowling league who pooled their resources and bought 310 tickets were among the first to claim a share of the giant prize, said lottery spokeswoman Joanne McNabb. Each would take home about \$12,000 a year for the next two decades. A second winner, in southern California, claimed to have not only a jackpot ticket but also a second-prize ticket worth an additional \$247,166. McNabb said lottery officials had not yet verified the winning tickets, and she said it may be several days before all of the winners are identified. "But we're ready for them," she said. The California jackpot — collected in a lotto game in which players pick six out of 53 numbers — began growing a month ago and reached \$117.1 million before the drawing.